

HOUSING POLICY AND COMMUNITY ACTION IN COUNTY DURHAM  
AND COUNTY ARMAGH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Housing Policy and Community Action in County Durham and County Armagh:  
a Comparative Study.

The problem which this thesis addresses is the relationship between housing policies and community action during the 1970s and early 1980s in County Durham, North East England and the north of County Armagh, Northern Ireland. This historical period has seen a transition from the dominance of "modernisation" objectives in housing and planning, and of modernist organised capitalist processes, to a "post-modern" period in which "disorganised" capitalist forms predominate.

The thesis presents a located, comparative historical account of how housing policy worked out in County Durham and County Armagh in relation to national and sub-national policy (the latter term being employed to take account of the considerable degree of administrative autonomy of the Stormont administration as a component of the UK state as well as local state processes in Britain). It then proceeds to a series of case studies of "community action", conceived of as accounts of reaction to the impact of modernisation and consequent housing and planning policies on working class localities, considered as bases of common experience and communal identification.

Through fundamentally historical methods the thesis documents and analyses the nature of housing policies in County Durham and County Armagh, ensuing action consequences and how housing policy responded

(ii)

(while also being subject to other sources of change). The end of "modernisation" is considered crucial to understanding the history of these events.

Tim Blackman  
December 1987

DECLARATION

I declare that the contents of this thesis  
have not been previously submitted at this  
or any other university.

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Tim Blackman  
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# COLONIAL CONSEQUENCE

The colony's so old it's out of touch  
with much that's bruited in the Capitol.  
The ports are silted up. The winds are such  
that most who leave are driven to the west,  
returning seldom if they come at all;  
infrequent letters, tediously expressed,  
yield year by year diminished interest.

But strangers from the mainland, eager men,  
the latest jargon lively on the tongue,  
here make their way among us; not as when  
our fathers came to tame this land and till  
and plant a thriving nation here among  
the black-browed tribes whose remnants linger still  
with random beacons on insurgent hill.

And briskly to their profit they attend,  
stuffing their satchels while we stand and gape,  
so drilled in old obedience we lend  
the stranger's voice authority and awe,  
and have among us some who seek to ape  
his accent, seeing how all strangers draw  
vast credit from this insubstantial law.

Yet we have seen them come and watched them go,  
their flashing names forgotten in a year,  
with not a shred of evidence to show  
by what manoeuvres they achieved their score,  
while out of that old superstitious fear  
we greet the newest comers to our shore,  
no whit the wiser than we were before.

John Hewitt  
1986

A NOTE ON REFERENCING

This thesis draws on a wide variety of data sources and literature. For books, journal articles, reports, working papers, major conference papers, etc., sources cited in the text are listed alphabetically by author in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis. For all other written data sources, including pamphlets, newsletters, minutes, letters, statistical sources, etc., and for interviews and participant observation roles, details are given in Appendix 2, which is referred to by means of numbers inserted at appropriate points in the text.

Appendix 1 discusses general methodological issues. It also lists all newspapers and magazines consulted and all interviews undertaken. With regard to interviews, informants' names are not given in cases where this was considered inappropriate, but in all cases the position and location of the informant and the date of the interview are stated.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The issue: the working class experience of modernisation

The research issue and problematic (1) of this thesis is "modernisation". This term is used to describe the large-scale state provision and management of housing and infrastructure in County Durham and North Armagh during the post-war period until the end of the long post-war boom, when the state began retreating into much more selective and "entrepreneurial" interventions. The present thesis arises from an interest in a number of cases of community action about housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh in the late 1970s, at the end of the "modernisation era". These struggles related to two features of housing policy in this era: (i) the centrality of redevelopment; and (ii) mass housing in "growth centres". Both of these dominated the working class experience of modernisation in County Durham and North Armagh.

The local state was the vehicle for modernisation in housing and planning but the "public housing apparatus" - the powerful organisations and groups which determined the post-war policy of mass clearance and rehousing in managed and "functionally efficient" mass state housing - consisted essentially of central government, the design professionals and the construction industry (Dunleavy, 1981, pp. 9-33). Modernising housing and planning policies were transformed more dramatically than



any other area of the Keynesian Welfare State by the effects of the slow-down in economic expansion during the 1970s and public expenditure restraint. The present thesis attempts to show how these national changes interacted with people and localities in County Durham and North Armagh.

The thesis has two main types of concern. First, a concern with the transition to "early post-modernism" in housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh. Other authors have discussed the general features of economic and political changes which have been involved in an apparent transition in the UK and US economies from "modern" to "post-modern" accumulation and legitimation strategies, especially the shift from "Fordism" to "flexible accumulation" and from the Keynesian Welfare State to Monetarism/Thatcherism (Armstrong, Glyn and Harrison, 1984; Gough, 1986; Harvey, 1987; Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley and Ling, 1984; Scott and Storper, 1986). The transition has recently been subjected to detailed analysis by Lash and Urry (1987), who equate the end of "modernisation" with the end of "organised capitalism", and "post-modernism" with "disorganised capitalism". They argue that the general features of organised capitalism have been strong centralisation and interconnections between banks and industry, managerialism and technocratic planning, an organised and central manufacturing workforce, clearly identifiable regional economies and "modern" cultural and ideological values. The general features of disorganised capitalism have been a deconcentration of capital, the rise of white-collar workers as a distinctive "service class" against a background of major losses of blue-collar jobs, a fragmentation of trade union activity, a breaking

down of "regional economies" and the growth of "post-modern" cultural and ideological values. Lash and Urry show that while not all these developments occurred at the same time or in the same way in all western countries, a structural transformation is evident. In the case of the UK, they argue that capitalism started to "organise" in the inter-war period and began "disorganising" in the 1960s, bringing about major changes in the social relations of civil society and the state:

"Economic change, most notably the effects on occupational structure connected with the accumulation of capital, is subsequently the precondition of disorganisation of civil society. The latter, most visible in multiplication and fragmentation of interest groups - inside and outside of the labour movement - is itself the precondition of disorganisation in the state, in the ideal-typical model, instantiated in, for example, the decline of neo-corporatism, the development of the catch-all party, and class dealignment." (p. 7)

The present study is specifically concerned with changes in housing and planning strategies which appear to have closely followed this economic restructuring, principally recommodification and the expansion of entrepreneurialism in "post-modern" housing and planning policy. Harvey (1987, p. 7) contrasts this with the "managerialism" of modernisation.

The second main concern of the thesis is to present a structured account of freedom and constraint in civil society by focusing on "community action" about housing in County Durham and North Armagh. Particular attention is paid to the constraining institutional environment, particularly that of the state, in case studies of community action which document sequences of action and reaction in time. This empirical

work is then related to the perspectives on modernisation and post-modernism developed in chapter 2 in particular.

Chapter 2 conceptualises "modernisation" as a strategy which attempted to accommodate two conflicting forces. On the one hand the strategy was a response to expectations among a relatively united and homogeneous industrial working class during the era of "organised" capitalism for social reconstruction and a larger share of the fruits of economic expansion. On the other hand the strategy was a response to the needs of major, increasingly transnational, corporations for state intervention to create large pools of labour and modern infrastructure to develop the productive forces of social labour during the post-war boom. It is argued that "full employment", subsidised state housing, "universalist" social welfare and "comprehensive" land-use planning were components of this strategy, constituting what has been termed the Keynesian Welfare State (Gough, 1979, pp. 55-74; Jessop, 1982, p. 244; Panitch, 1986, pp. 4-9). Although there were differences between Labour and Conservative Governments in specific policy areas, there was until the 1970s generally a consensus about these objectives of state intervention to manage the economy and provide welfare within a "one nation" framework (see Plant, 1983). In economic policy the main features during the "modernisation era" were the rationalisation of old basic industries, with serious job losses, the expansion of state services and employment, and the creation on a large scale of additional labour reserves in peripheral regions (Massey, 1984, p. 251). These developments had a major impact on both County Durham and North Armagh.

Thus, a transition from "modernism" to "early post-modernism" is postulated, involving a significant restructuring of social relations as a result of economic restructuring, particularly an increasing differentiation of the working class and of consumption patterns, and marked ideological shifts in many areas (see Gough, 1986; Hall, 1983). Under the Thatcher Governments policies have been directed towards strengthening the frameworks within which markets operate, at the cost of increasing polarisation, especially in housing (Plant, 1983; Forrest and Murie, 1986). However, the terms "modernisation" and "post-modernism" are not employed in the present thesis as theoretical concepts, implying a general theory of state intervention over these periods, but as descriptions of what appear to be two rather different eras of accumulation, consumption and state policy, separated by a period of transition during the late 1960s-1970s. The reason for the transition certainly seems to be connected with changes in accumulation strategies resulting from crises of over-accumulation (Harvey, 1987), but as Ball (1986a) stresses, identifying mechanisms which lead to pressures for state intervention (or retrenchment) does not enable its particular form to be predicted. The form of intervention has to be politically constructed. It is this process, as it occurred in housing and planning policy in relation to particular localities, that is documented in the case studies which follow chapter 2.

Massey (1984, pp. 236-264) has argued that the failure of "modernisation" to prevent economic crisis in the UK lay in its weakness as a strategy to control either labour or capital. It had attempted to do this by constructing a corporatist alliance between big "modern"

capital and the male manual working class. Thompson (1984) argues that this alliance culminated with the 1964-70 Labour administration, when it was also a means of attempting to deal with intensifying industrial conflict brought about by the effects of the transition to "disorganisation" (see Lash and Urry, 1987, pp. 108-109). Massey (1984) describes the important general features of "modern" corporatism, which spanned over twenty-five years of different governments until the final break from the Keynesian Welfare State following the New Right's General Election victory of 1979:

"The attempt to incorporate the working class in the strategy for modernisation also included the appointment of 'its representatives' in State and para-State organisations ... The hope in particular was that trade union leaders - and thereby the membership - would co-operate by bearing the immediate burdens of technical change and restructuring - in other words, of 'modernisation'. In return, there was to be a strong element of social democratic reform ... (But the) whole conception of reform was a 'from-the-top-down' affair, transmitted through the organs of the State." (pp. 238-239, 252)

An aspect of modernisation which had a major impact on both County Durham and North Armagh was the large-scale population movements necessitated by the policy of assembling additional labour reserves. This exercise was legitimated by environmental professionals and political leaders with claims that the needs of capital were basically identical to those of working class people. The new housing estates were not just to serve incoming transnationals, but also to improve the quality of working class life. Community action against the effects of modernising housing and planning policies took place within a context pre-structured by the dominating interests of capital, central

government strategy, the local government system and environmental professionals. This context changed markedly as the modernisation era drew to a close, and this had a determining effect on the outcomes of community action.

Although it is argued that post-war modernisation was the historical backcloth to community action about housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh in the late 1970s, this action was investigated during a time of major changes in housing and planning policy. These changes transformed the structures and policies of modernisation, particularly centralised planning, the large-scale production of infrastructure and mass state housing managed by big corporate local authorities. The new structures and policies are referred to in this thesis as "early post-modern". Important legislation was the 1980 Housing Act and the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act, which brought about a very substantial shift in the balance of power between local and central government towards the latter, the curtailment of expanding local government expenditures and a markedly increased emphasis on commodification measures, privatised consumption and means of self-help rather than collective provision, state services and the reduction of social inequalities (Loughlin, Gelfand and Young, 1985; Ball, 1983a). Although certain aspects of these post-1979 policies might still be regarded as "modernist" - the programmes of the Urban Development Corporations for example - such intervention has been very localised and designed to support market processes rather than to reconstruct the economic and social fabric of large areas to bring them into "one nation" - which, in theory at least, was the intention of the

"growth centre" strategies of the modernisation era in peripheral regions (see Klausner, 1986; and chapters 2 and 9).

Most of the community action studied during the research for this thesis happened when the framework was being put into place for the beginning of the "early post-modern era" in housing and planning policy. As discussed in chapter 2, this was not a clean break with past policy but an intensification of earlier trends. These developments had a significant bearing upon community action about housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh, especially the effects on civil society of the demise of strategic spatial policy, the decline of local state expenditures on housing provision and services, the shift towards rehabilitation and away from redevelopment, the expansion of "self-help" housing schemes, and the residualisation of state housing. The changes were associated with a considerable weakening of the powers of local government. Local government appeared to become increasingly redundant from the point of view of the central state as modernisation came to an end. In contrast to the generally consensual relationships between local and central government which existed during the modernisation era of expanding local state expenditures, the 1970s, and post-1979 in particular, saw this relationship in a state of crisis in many areas of Britain (see Bramley, 1984). As well as ratecapping and abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils, a declining proportion of public spending was by elected local government with the expansion of unelected quasi-governmental agencies in housing and planning (McConaghy, 1985). In Northern Ireland, such agencies dominated housing and planning by the



early 1970s, although the process of relegating local government to a marginal role had a different history (see below and chapter 2).

### 1.2 The research problem: community action about housing

Modernisation in housing and planning involved the intervention on a large scale of various agencies of the state in civil society in County Durham and North Armagh. It also involved the promulgation of a modernist ideology. The agencies involved included local councils new town development corporations, the Department of the Environment and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. These agencies had significance beyond the actual process of providing housing; they were means of implementing strategic spatial policies which involved the physical relocation and re-housing of local populations. These were central components of the modernisation strategy for accumulation and reproduction within the post-war political settlement of reform and expansion. However, from the late 1970s these agencies operated in the very different climate of early post-modernism, and other agencies such as housing associations grew in prominence as local council and new town development corporation involvement in redevelopment and the direct provision of rented housing was considerably reduced.

These changes had profound effects on the nature of social action in civil society. It is the manifestation of community action against the local state about housing and planning which forms the operational area of investigation of this thesis - the research problem. This action is analysed as responses to the experience of modernisation among sections

of the working class. The experience of economic modernisation has been documented for a number of localities in North East England and Northern Ireland (e.g. Coventry, Liverpool, Newcastle, North Tyneside Trades Councils, 1980; Hudson, 1985; Austrin and Beynon, 1979; Hall, 1986; Gillespie, 1983). There have also been a number of studies of the social costs (e.g. Dennis, 1970; 1972; North Tyneside Community Development Project, 1976; Bulmer, 1978; Wiener, 1980). The present thesis attempts, through a comparative study, to theorise the experience of modernisation in housing and planning in terms of a "contest of domains" between the capitalist state and civil society.

There are many definitions of "community action", but one of the most straightforward is that of Lovett, Clarke and Kilmurray (1983, p. 13), who state:

"... community action is a category of collective social action, based in working class residential areas, to tackle a wide range of issues arising outside the traditional places of employment. It is therefore to be distinguished from industrial action taken by trade unionists and from the electoral activities of formal political parties. It is also separate from the statutory social services run by state welfare bodies."

Thus community action takes place in civil society, by which is meant "where people live" or what Urry (1985, p. 22) calls "the characteristic social relations and social practices within and between households". Urry (1981a) describes civil society as "a set of social relations that lie between the economic structure and the state" (p. 10). He argues that it is comprised of three spheres: (i) the sphere of circulation is the buying and selling of commodities; (ii) the sphere of reproduction

is the distribution and consumption of commodities, which in the case of the reproduction of labour power in particular demands state policy and action; and (iii) the sphere of struggle describes the social struggles for "formal exchange equality" (the exchange of commodities between formally free and equal juridic subjects) and for political equality. These two types of struggle relate to the first two spheres - struggles for exchange equality relate to the sphere of circulation and for political equality to the sphere of reproduction. The community action studied in the present thesis involves struggles in both of Urry's spheres, e.g. struggles for the "freedom" of groups of private housing owners to do with their housing what they please (even in one case to convert to a housing co-operative), and struggles by groups of tenants for more control over the actions of their public sector landlords.

At an abstract level this community action entailed a "contest of domains". The domain of the capitalist state expanded considerably during post-war modernisation (to such an extent that the notion of an autonomous "civil society" becomes problematic, a question which is addressed in chapter 9). The extent of this expansion - a product of reproduction needs - became a major political issue in the early post-modern period when the Thatcherite state was attempting to reduce state provision and expand the sphere of circulation by privatising housing, encouraging entrepreneurial planning and stimulating self-reliance. Both during modernisation and subsequent early post-modernism this contest required mechanisms by which the central state could resolve housing and planning issues "in the national interest", whether through, for example, a new town corporation or the public local inquiry. From

1979 the expansion of central control has meant considerably reducing individual local councils' discretion to make policy decisions for their areas (Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1983).

As is shown in later chapters, community action about modernisation was diverse and complex. It does not seem possible to analyse it simply in terms of class struggle between labour and capital, but involves examining what different groups did in the context of the system forces of capitalism acting upon them. Panitch (1986a) analyses the origins of the "post-modern" economic and social policies of the Thatcher Governments in terms of changes in accumulation strategies, and the failure of the Keynesian Welfare State to resolve capitalist crises without major costs to capital. In housing and planning these national "post-modern" policies had to be applied in particular localities, with the possibility of conflicts between the two levels of government noted above, particularly in areas like County Durham and North Armagh where modernisation had been so ingrained in local state institutions. However, the situation was more complicated than this. The introduction of the new policies also meant changes in the context of other relationships such as those between county and districts, and between local government and people in local civil society ("officialdom-people" relations). Although addressing aspects of the former, it is the latter on which the present thesis focuses.

The "local state", the sub-national policy-making and administrative state bodies such as the Stormont government, local councils, new town development corporations and quasi-governmental agencies of various

kinds, is in greater proximity to local civil society than the central state. It is located within the conflicting social forces of civil society. Civil society is a domain in which classes and other forces interrelate, rather than in which there is a straightforward identification of class interests (Urry, 1981a, p. 152). Thus the local state figures prominently in the community action studied in this thesis, for it was integrally involved in housing and planning functions and conflicts at local level. Primarily this entailed elected local government in County Durham and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, an unelected quasi-governmental agency, in North Armagh, but new town development agencies also had important roles in both sub-regions. However, policy conflicts between central and local government in recent years, and the increase in the dominance of the centre, meant that national politics were a crucial determining factor in local "officialdom-people" conflicts, not least in bringing about the end of modernising housing and planning policy.

In Northern Ireland the national state intervened to govern localities directly in 1972 with the introduction of Direct Rule, brought about by the political crisis in which local government was deeply caught up (Birrell and Murie, 1980, pp. 155-190; O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson, 1980, pp. 95-118). In Britain the erosion of local government autonomy accelerated after 1979 - also, it has been argued, because the local state was too vulnerable to the politics of the locality, which could present disruptive opposition to the national project of restructuring for capital (Duncan and Goodwin, 1982).

As will be apparent from the above discussion, the field of investigation of the present thesis is social policy, and specifically housing and planning policy. It is within this field that the research problem is located. Material is drawn from the various disciplines of the social sciences, especially the body of critical and marxist work in urban and regional studies which developed during the 1970s (see Lebas, 1982 for a review). The primary purpose of doing this is not to contribute to the theoretical development of any particular "discipline", but to attempt to understand the area of social reality under consideration and to draw out the implications of this understanding for further work. As was proposed above, it is intended to conceptualise the problem of community action as a contest of domains between state and civil society. This is done by presenting structured accounts of social action, showing how key issues emerged from people's experiences of the state in civil society, what they did about it and the outcomes of local struggles. This evidence is then discussed in the concluding chapter in terms of the concepts discussed in this chapter and the contextual material of chapter 2.

The developments in realist method in social science have been useful in analysing this evidence. These developments are not, it is argued, a return to Althusserianism as Saunders (1986, pp. 352-362) claims. Rather, they are a means of organising information so that knowledge about what appear to be generative mechanisms can be combined with knowledge about contingently related phenomena to build explanations of concrete outcomes that vary across time and space (Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, p. 249; see also subsequent discussions and

Appendix 1). These explanations can then be critically scrutinised and discussed. As Urry (1981a, p. 8) puts it, although realist accounts may fall into the trap of Althusserian determinism, this has to be guarded against by establishing the crucial roles of social concepts, forms of struggle and the state in civil society which mediate between social actors and necessary generative mechanisms in the capitalist system, causing variations in concrete outcomes.

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. The remainder of the present chapter, chapter 1, is devoted a discussion of the research strategy, methodology and the concepts of class, locality and state as they are used in subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 is an account of the spatial and housing policy contexts of the investigation, particularly the "structural" pressures on actors in localities which result from movements of capital and central government intervention. Chapters 3 to 8 present the case studies of community action, showing how policy applied throughout the country interacted with social action in localities. Chapter 9 synthesises the material of chapters 3 to 8 in the context of chapter 1, and makes some conclusions.

### 1.3 The research strategy

The research strategy involves a historical investigation based on a series of case studies of community action which are analysed to identify regularities, common patterns and distinguishing features. These are explained by reference to analytical concepts which are discussed in this chapter. Thus, the strategy is "extensive" rather

than "intensive" (Sayer, 1984, pp. 219-228), although the number of case studies is relatively small and the accounts, of necessity, relatively detailed. However, while Sayer (1984, pp. 222-223) states that quantitative techniques are the typical tools of extensive research, which often involves many cases, this study uses qualitative techniques which are fundamentally historical. Qualitative techniques were necessary, in Giddens' (1984, p. 327) words, to enable the "methodological insertion of the research investigator into whatever material is the object of study". In this case, the researcher studied community action through interviews, inspection of a diverse range of documents and periods of participant observation. Jenkins (1983, p. 24) describes this as "a methodologically promiscuous approach" which, he suggests, is fundamental to "a social science paradigm which allows us to construct a model of the institutional pattern of society as produced and reproduced in the practice of real people".

Methodological details and a discussion of issues raised may be found in Appendix 1. Details of data sources, other than bibliographical references, are given in Appendix 2, to which reference is made in the text as appropriate.

The author spent many months interacting with social actors involved in community action, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews with other actors who had been involved in the social processes being investigated, such as housing officers and community workers. The author deliberately inserted himself at the community action, rather than the state management, end of things, so that the accounts produced



are from the perspective of the location of social actors in civil society (but not necessarily reflecting the perspectives of the actors themselves). Frequent informal discussions were held with community action participants about the nature of the processes in which they were involved.

Although establishing good relations with these actors, the author did not engage in committed action-research for two reasons. The first was the extensive and historical nature of the research, which made in-depth involvement in specific struggles impractical. The second was that by avoiding open partisanship in the case studies, it was possible to obtain information that might not otherwise have been disclosed.

However, in every case informants were made aware of the research context of the author's interaction, and in general co-operation was forthcoming (there were a few cases of participants in past community action and private building contractors refusing co-operation).

Informants often engaged in debate with the author about their particular point of view and provided information of value to the study to support their position. As Castells (1983, p. 342) reports, researchers are often granted a surprising amount of co-operation because of people's desire to understand their own experience. But, as considered in Appendix 1, there are limits to how far this approach, especially in an extensive research strategy, reveals knowledge beyond the partial accounts of social actors whom it was possible to access. These accounts, however, are largely what the thesis - with its aim of placing working class experience and action in a critical historical and theoretical context - is about.

In essence, the raw data for the present thesis were experiences: those reported by informants, what it was possible to glean from documents and the researcher's own in his participant observation roles. Analysis involved establishing a conceptual framework able to explain the history of community action about housing and planning in the case study areas over the period under investigation. This was done through studying the literature and discussions with colleagues with the aim of arriving at working positions on key concepts. The evidence gathered in the field as case studies was then used to inform these interpretations and to propose a framework for understanding what happened.

Sayer (1984, pp. 79-107) argues that such a framework must be able to explain social phenomena at the appropriate level(s) at which necessary and/or sufficient conditions occur that generate the phenomena the investigator is interested in explaining. Thus the research strategy involves conceptualising key generative processes, gathering data which are then analysed using these concepts, and drawing conclusions about what is discovered and its significance.

The combination of a broadly extensive research strategy and qualitative techniques involved the collection of data on several case studies. The accounts based on these data are constructed to show how processes worked in each case - what produced certain changes and what social actors actually did. However the extension of the research across several case studies in two sub-regions inevitably meant for practical reasons that intensive studies could not be made of each case. Rather, the aim was to identify characteristics and processes common to the case

studies, and to examine whether these could be postulated as necessary generative mechanisms. Given the extensive nature of the research, general conclusions are likely to be provisional.

It has been proposed that the test of whether explanations at an abstract level can be accepted, at least provisionally, as accounting for the social phenomena reported is that they must be capable of extension to lower, more concrete levels without contradiction (Sayer, 1984, pp. 79-107; Jessop, 1982, pp. 212-220). As far as the present research is not intensive, i.e. as far as no thorough causal explanation of any particular case is presented, this must remain an open question for further research. What is claimed is that by demonstrating that "modernisation" generated community action about housing in both North Armagh and Country Durham, and that the transition to early post-modernism largely resolved the type of issues involved, but generated new ones that again were similar in both areas, e.g. for the occupants of the mass state housing modernisation spawned, then this process plays a necessary role in what happened in two areas that might otherwise be thought to be rather different. Furthermore, it is suggested (i) that "modernist" and "post-modernist" policies themselves operated in virtue of more abstract generative forces and (ii) that general conclusions can be made from a study of modernism and post-modernism about the nature of relations between state, civil society and capital. These two points, however, involve more speculative analysis.

A key methodological aid in constructing explanations at a more abstract level than the "local-concrete" from local case studies is comparative

analysis. Harloe and Martens (1984) argue that comparative housing research is of considerable value in helping to understand the directions in which housing markets and policies are moving. With regard to international comparisons these authors state that the approach has two main advantages:

"The first, and maybe most important, is the new light they can cast on old housing problems. In this sense comparative analysis acts as an heuristic device, questioning old concepts and modes of thought. The second advantage of the comparative method is that some generalizations may be made about the broad factors which help to structure housing markets and policies ... At the same time, the approach that we have suggested can also begin to analyse the variation in how these broad problems are experienced in practice in each country (and why such variations exist)." (p. 272)

Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, pp. 23-31) develop the heuristic aspect of the usefulness of comparative analysis. They argue that although such analysis does not enable social science to emulate experimental control in natural science, it does have two major roles. Firstly, it guards against taking situations for granted and against false generalization or abstraction because findings can be cross-checked. Secondly, although it is not possible to control the variability of social reality, comparative analysis does permit some reduction in variability. It can be used to attempt to isolate common generative processes, while also identifying what is particular about any one case.

To conclude this section, it is important to emphasise that the present thesis is primarily an historical study. The historical component has consisted of constructing accounts of the background to, and the course

and experience of, community action about housing. This has involved using a combination of unpublished and published documentary material and oral history to "discover" what happened in the case study areas. This historical approach was necessary in order to explain what was encountered during the period of fieldwork, mainly between 1980 and 1982. What Abrams (1982, p. 302) describes as "how it happened puzzles" are approached by attempting to demonstrate "significant patterning" which can then be explained in terms of the key concepts of the thesis as expressions of historical processes with certain generative mechanisms underlying them. These key concepts have been considerably developed subsequent to the collection of empirical material largely because the ideas which suggested them have only fairly recently appeared and been debated in the literature, such as in the work on the local state, localities and modernisation and post-modern strategies. Their availability has enabled a much more satisfactory analysis of the material collected to illuminate the research problem than would have been the case in the early 1980s. Thus, although the present researcher set out to answer "how it happened" questions, i.e. to demonstrate eventuation, and "how it was" questions, i.e. to describe experiences of events, in undertaking his collection of empirical material, this material has itself been analytically structured by looking back at these events and experiences. As Abrams (1982, p. 317) puts it in his discussion of historical sociology:

"(W)e cannot as I see it hope to recover the past (or the present) as it was in all its empirical actuality, only to know it as it 'must have been' from our own more or less theoretically considered present situation. Social realities are there for the discovering but discovering them involves analytical distance as well as empirical access; they are not to be known by direct representation.

Social reality stands behind social appearances not in the relation of face to veil but in the relation of process to moment. Its apprehension is more a matter of analytical structuring than of empirical seeing-through."

#### 1.4 Choosing the case studies

Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985) argue that it is the unusual or abnormal case that is often the most useful in comparative work, because it enables generalizations and variations to be more rigorously examined. Northern Ireland was selected as a region from which to draw case studies of community action for comparison with studies made in County Durham, where the researcher was based. O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson (1980) have put forward an influential argument that Northern Ireland is an "abnormal" capitalist society because of deep structural sectarian divisions and the marginality of "class" politics in a region where it might be expected to be more central. They claim that:

"This is no accident or atavistic survival immune to modern political forms, for sectarianism in the ideological sense does not merely obscure class differences, it also reveals the materiality of sectarian division at all levels in Northern Ireland." (p. 26)

It was decided to compare cases of community action in this "abnormal society" with cases drawn from County Durham, a sub-region with relatively few deep religious or ethnic divisions and where "class politics" has a continuing centrality. If community action in Northern Ireland can be shown to be generated by wider common processes and to be linked via these processes with other cases in County Durham, then explanations at a general and abstract level can begin to be constructed

which should be capable of extension to lower concrete levels, taking into account local contingencies. These contingencies may be very important in explaining local variations, but are not the necessary generative mechanisms.

An example, it is suggested, is sectarianism and related social segregation in Northern Ireland. In their study, O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson (1980, pp. 31-67) suggest that Craigavon new town, which forms the case study area for chapters 7 and 8, was a creation of sectarianism: Stormont's Brasilia. However, the analysis developed in the present thesis is that the generative mechanism which gave rise to new towns as growth centres for peripheral regions derived from "modernisation", a strategy which responded to the system forces of capitalism at the time (especially the Fordist-type accumulation strategies of transnationals, including the factors identified by Lash and Urry, 1987, pp. 101-102)). Modernising "solutions" interacted with particular local conditions - in this example sectarian division in Northern Ireland - to give rise to variation between Northern Ireland and North East England in the actual nature of the same processes of redevelopment, infrastructure provision and large scale population movement. This is described in more detail in chapter 2. The analysis, which was suggested (although not specifically for Northern Ireland) by Massey (1983), counters that of O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson (1980), who treat sectarianism as a basal, generative phenomenon.

What are interpreted as contingently related conditions in this thesis, such as sectarianism, are not irrelevant to the process of explanation.

As Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, p. 249) state:

"... 'contingent conditions' should in no sense be considered 'secondary' or 'unimportant', since it is these which are activating and determining where, when, how, perhaps even whether necessary relations and tendencies generate concrete outcomes. Causal mechanisms are only activated through the operation of contingent relations which are not necessary to the objects or relations which incorporate necessary generative mechanisms."

Five case studies were drawn from County Durham, an area of predominantly small towns and villages associated with a history of coal mining and where two early post-war new towns, Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe, are located. A third new town, Washington, was designated in 1964, but from 1974 became part of Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County. These new towns were central elements of post-war social and economic modernisation in the region.

The North East as a whole has a history of regionally-based capital (dominated by the "coal combines"), the importance of which, however, was replaced during the post-war period of modernisation by transnational capital (Benwell Community Project, 1978; Massey, 1984, pp. 99-109). The industrialisation of the region gave rise to a large industrial working class within which the British Labour Party became hegemonic by 1945. Post-war economic and social change recomposed the class to a considerable extent, but the region has remained a "Labour heartland", especially County Durham.



Chapman (1985, p. 13) argues that the North East is by almost any criterion a distinctive region. The coalfield areas of County Durham are even more distinctive because of their narrow industrial base and the subsequent effects of its dramatic decline (with, for example, some 48,000 jobs lost in its pits in just four years from 1964 to 1968; Massey, 1984, p. 244)). Post-war policies of spatial reorganisation to create new conditions for capital accumulation were particularly visible responses to this decline. They took the form of "settlement categorisation" whereby labour was concentrated in large pools in "growth centres" while smaller, peripheral settlements were subjected to disinvestment and decline. Major local government figures in the region played a crucial part in this exercise.

The political culture of Northern Ireland presents a stark contrast to the Labourism of North East England, although the region has much in common with the North East's experience of industrialisation and narrow sectoral specialisation, followed by deindustrialisation and modernisation policies (Hall, 1986). Three case studies were drawn from North Armagh, or Mid-Ulster, which was an industrial heartland manufacturing textiles and clothing. The two main local centres of North Armagh were Lurgan and Portadown. The industrial base of the area was severely eroded by the accelerating downward trend in traditional linen production and employment during the 1950s and 1960s, and the subsequent penetration of transnationals through both new investment (attracted by modern infrastructure and assisted by government grants) and take-overs (Hall, 1986, pp. 192-216, 228-232, 270-274). Lurgan and Portadown became the two ends of a linear new town, Craigavon,

designated in 1965 as Northern Ireland's centre-piece of modernisation and prime "growth centre".

At the outset of the research an overview was made of contemporary and recent cases of community action about housing and planning issues in County Durham and North Armagh (see Appendix 1). Such struggles can take a wide range of forms, many being small-scale incidences of collective action about transitory issues. However in County Durham four particularly sustained and illustrative cases were identified in the new town of Peterlee, the mass housing estate of Bessemer Park and in the villages of Langley Park and Framwellgate Moor (chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively). The first two were about housing conditions in "growth centres" and the second two were about redevelopment in old urban centres in the county.

The history of post-war redevelopment and state housing in County Durham is associated with settlement categorisation to a remarkable degree (see chapter 2). The widespread community action in the county during the 1960s and 1970s which was generated by settlement categorisation and its housing and planning corollaries forms a separate case study (chapter 3). The chapter is important historical background to the later and much fewer cases of community action in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

In North Armagh cases of community action were found in the new town of Craigavon, particularly in the new housing sector of Brownlow (chapter 8). Towards the end of the fieldwork in 1982 attempts began to incorporate community action in this locale into a Housing Executive

management exercise to reduce vacancies in the housing stock. As in County Durham, the context of the situation in which residents in Craigavon found themselves in the early 1980s could be located historically in terms of a strategy of spatial restructuring and modernisation during the 1960s-1970s. This had also encountered resistance in the form of community action in localities threatened with disinvestment and depopulation as resources were concentrated in "growth centres" (chapter 7).

The empirical data are organised into chapters 3 to 8, which take the reader through a structured account of modernisation, community action responses and early post-modern conjunctures in County Durham and North Armagh. Both sub-regions saw fairly extensive community action against spatial restructuring in the 1960s and '70s (chapters 3 and 7). The case studies of this action form introductions to the accounts of community action of the late 1970s and early 1980s in County Durham (chapters 4, 5 and 6) and North Armagh (chapter 8). Analysis is presented at appropriate points in these chapters, with a synthesis in chapter 9.

It is necessary, to appreciate why analysis has been conducted the way it has, to consider certain concepts which are used in the thesis. The relevance of "civil society" as a realm where community action occurs against the state in response to particular experiences has already been noted. The related notion of contending domains of the capitalist state and civil society has also been introduced. The next sections further

develop the points that have been made about these issues by considering specifically the concepts of class, locality and state.

### 1.5 Class relations

This thesis is not concerned with the analysis of class relations, which is more appropriately investigated through intensive research.

Therefore, a general working position has been adopted which defines the working class in the broad sense which Nichols (1981, p. 164) uses:

"It is a class which lacks not only effective economic ownership but lacks possession, both in the sense of control over physical means of production, and in the sense of control over the labour power of others."

It is recognised that within such a large category there will be significant differentiation according to gender, occupation, income, age, ethnic origin, consumption, lifestyle, religion, etc. However it is accepted that the basal division is between capital and the working class, that is, "who is on what side in the dominant relations of exploitation" (Nichols, 1981, pp. 167-168; emphasis added). But within the working class relations of domination exist which are reproduced institutionally and relate to cultural, gender, occupational and other bases for this division. In the present thesis it is argued that sectarian division within the working class of Northern Ireland is an example of relations of domination; it is also a division which has unjustifiably received more attention from academics than gender division in the region (Hall, 1986, p. 43). As well as benefitting

those who dominate, such relations give rise to a range of different working class experiences of exploitation under capitalism (Miliband, 1985).

The crucial distinguishing feature between class relations and sectarian, gender or other types of social relations is that the former are relations of exploitation - the appropriation of surplus value by capital - and the latter are relations of domination - putting one section of the working class in charge of the other (Byrne and Parson, 1983, p. 149). Thus while struggles against exploitation entail struggle by working class actors against capital (struggle in all its various forms as Cleaver (1979) analyses them), struggles against domination can involve the "dominating" group in the struggle to emancipate the "dominated" (for example, the involvement of protestant workers in campaigns against discrimination or emergency legislation in Northern Ireland, or men's involvement in women's struggles).

The implication of the above discussion for the present study is that it seems quite possible to accommodate the conflicts within the working class which are described in the case studies within a broadly marxist framework. For example, conflict between a working class community association and a Labour-controlled local authority may be analysed in terms of relations of domination, a point further developed in section 1.7 below. As was discussed above, this may be conceptualised as a conflict between two domains - civil society, or the places where working people live their day-to-day lives - and the local state, concerned with the management of reproduction within, in County Durham,

a social democratic ideology of modernisation, and in Northern Ireland within an ideology of sectarian modernisation until the statelet was brought under the direct administration of the British state in 1972, which managed the abandonment of modernisation. The termination of the role of directly elected local councils in administering reproduction in Northern Ireland made the relations of domination somewhat clearer, although the incorporation of tenant action into housing management which occurred in the early 1980s in Craigavon indicated a concern, at least initially, with legitimizing the management of reproduction in the absence of local democracy.

Urry (1981a) relates the state's role within civil society to the two spheres of civil society he identifies: the sphere of circulation and the sphere of reproduction. He argues that the dominance of reproduction in the post-war period has seen a proportionate decline in class as opposed to other kinds of struggle (p. 129). However others, such as Cockburn (1978) and Cowley, Kaye, Mayo and Thompson (1977) argue that reproduction is "the new terrain of class struggle" (Cockburn, 1978, pp. 158-184; in fact reproductive struggles are not so new (Samuel, 1985; Mark-Lawson, Savage and Warde, 1985)). Cleaver (1979, pp. 26-27) conceptualises reproduction in much broader terms than Urry as the "social factory", where "sectoral" class struggles circulate about consumption issues. Consumption, in Cleaver's analysis, is absolutely central to the reproduction of capitalism and the working class within it, not just because this is how labour power is reproduced but also, crucially, because of the significance of the consuming power of society in surplus value production (see also O'Connor, 1981).

The social factory concept treats reproduction which occurs outside the workplace as a class process and an arena of class struggle. This class nature of reproduction has to be approached historically. For example, while during the modernisation era Fordist production techniques in transnational branch plants demanded large labour pools in "growth centres", which only mass housing provided and managed by the state could supply, in the early post-modern era of "flexible accumulation" such labour pools have become redundant in many areas. National policy could return mass housing to the market, to a commodity to be individually owned, serviced and exchanged, except for a residual "welfare sector" which comprised much of the "modern housing" for "central workers" that was marginalised with the failure of modernisation. The decommodification and recommodification of housing have been reproductive strategies, which may well accommodate popular pressures (e.g. the quality and subsidisation of early council housing or mortgage interest tax relief in recent years) and are thus contingent upon the balance of social forces. Different housing consumption experiences result from this, but their cause is in terms of the articulation of reproduction. However, as just suggested, reproduction does not happen as an unmediated expression of central capitalist mechanisms, such as the drive to support accumulation in "growth centres" followed by the effects of over-accumulation (i.e. "capital logic"). It also involves processes of ideological construction, social struggle and state intervention which may be complicated by ideological, cultural and political relationships (see the discussion of Urry, 1981a, above). These often have strong local dimensions which may markedly

influence the nature of local reproduction and the struggles which may occur on this terrain.

Urry (1981a) defines reproduction rather narrowly in terms of the distribution and consumption of commodities, defining their exchange as circulation. The dominance of the former in the post-war period, he argues, has seen the decline of class politics and the rise of other types of "social struggle". However, Urry's analysis appears to need revision in the light of post-1979 developments. This is because the dominance of reproduction, as defined by Urry, now appears to have been a feature of post-war modernisation and the Keynesian Welfare State. Whilst the state has still necessarily been involved in reproduction during the early post-modern period, Thatcher Governments since 1979 have pursued a strategy of extending the sphere of circulation and capital has encouraged cultural and ideological practices which stimulate the consumption of commodities and self-provisioning rather than make demands on the state which displace the market. Some writers have interpreted the new forms of capitalism in the early post-modern era, especially the opportunities for consumption offered by flexible accumulation, as opening up the prospect of a future politics of radical individualism (Leadbeater, 1987; Saunders, 1986a; 1986b, pp. 332-351). However, as Harvey (1987) points out, this view fails to locate new forms of accumulation in terms of the reorganisation of exploitation and domination consequent upon periods of crisis in the system.

For example, it has been argued above that the demise of social democratic modernisation and large-scale state intervention to provide



directly means of reproduction during the 1970s was brought about by this strategy's failure to tackle economic crisis in UK capitalism, an important component of which was the power of organised labour after years of full employment and growth. Class struggle was clearly central to the history of this period (see Massey, 1984). However, Saunders (1986b, pp. 289-351) argues that the revival of the sphere of circulation (privatised consumption) in the early post-modern period has increased the significance of consumption-based struggles compared with class struggle. This is somewhat confusing given Urry's (1981a) analysis, described above, which is the other way round. The problem seems to be due to both authors' attempts to exorcize class from their analyses of struggles outside the realm of capitalist production.

Saunders (1986b, pp. 312-332) uses the concept of "consumption sectors" in his development of a non-class explanation of struggles outside the workplace. He attaches much significance to "cleavages" between social groups on the basis of differences in the types of goods and services these groups consume. This relates to the above discussion of class division, and the concept must clearly be considered when analysing housing struggles, particularly because one of the cleavages which has received most attention is that between those who can afford to purchase their housing on the market and those who have to rely on an increasingly residualised state sector.

For Saunders, far from uniting the working class, housing issues now divide it along consumption cleavages. He writes:

"Rather than assuming that consumption issues can unite classes which are normally opposed, it is empirically and theoretically more plausible to suggest that such issues may be expected to fragment classes which are normally unified. For every example of an urban movement which draws on a pluri-class social base, there are probably many more of consumption cleavages cutting through a single class and setting its members against each other. Like gender, ethnicity and nationality, consumption location tends to be class-divisive, and this is especially the case in a context (such as that in Britain since the late 1970s) where collective consumption provisions are being selectively cut back." (Saunders, 1986b, pp. 235-236).

The concept of tenure divisions as consumption cleavages is criticised by Merrett with Gray (1982, pp. 288-289) with reference to the work of Dunleavy, who first introduced the idea into the literature. They point out that within owner-occupation - and indeed state housing as well - there is marked differentiation and many possible "cleavages". Examples might be the conflict of interests between residents in older housing areas facing redevelopment proposals, when some want their houses retained and improved, and others want to sell up and move out of the area; or between the tenants of a "priority estate" which wins extra funds for improvements and the tenants of other estates in the district who see general maintenance spending cut back as a result (there are many other examples, but these were encountered during fieldwork for the present thesis). Saunders (1986a, p. 158) argues that nevertheless owner-occupation is a source of fundamentally different interests, and different "life chances", compared with state housing - which is hardly contentious as a generalization - but goes on to argue that owner-occupation is determining rather than determined. This leads to perhaps the most fundamental criticism of consumption cleavages that the nature of the capitalist production of all housing is incorrectly removed from

analysis (see Ball, 1986a, for a detailed critique). The criticisms of the emphasis on consumption/distribution in housing research, rather than on the structures of provision which actually determine the nature of housing provision and housing problems in all "tenures", apply equally to consumption cleavages (see Kemeny, 1980; Harloe and Martens, 1984; Ball, 1983a, 1983b; Merrett, 1979). Ball (1985) sums these up in arguing that housing issues have to be analysed in terms of the capitalist structures of housing provision which dominate people's experience of "housing consumption". As he puts it:

"Instead of simply delimiting a means of consumption, housing tenure is associated with historically specific relations of provision. A series of social agencies are associated with housing provision in any tenure form. Their existence is not a necessary consequence of the tenure itself, but the products of long historical struggles. The interrelation of those social agents determines the contemporary characteristics of a tenure form, like house price inflation or jerry built high rise council blocks. To ignore those social agencies leads to a failure to analyse the causes of particular characteristics of housing tenures ..." (p. 24)

Thus state intervention in the housing market is explained in terms of the failures of specific capitalist structures of provision as means of reproduction (ideological and physical). In the case of housing renewal, with which the present thesis is particularly concerned, the state underpins market processes but does not confront the market forces which cause obsolescence in the first place (Stewart, 1982). It is responding primarily to political pressures while avoiding displacing private capital from housing provision. Furthermore, it seems very difficult to make generalisations about the way "tenure" determines political or community action, and thus demands on the state, as for

example Boddy (1980, pp. 23-26) does in arguing that there is more potential for collective action in state housing. In the case studies of the present thesis, the most effective community action was by working class owner-occupiers, and struggles in state housing were weaker and more short-lived. Although these struggles were about the imposition of "housing consumption experiences" upon the working class, in which local state institutions played crucial roles, it is argued that these experiences have to be set within the context of the capitalist processes, including resistance to market forces, which were determining factors in shaping housing policies.

The parallel between the concept of consumption sector and O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson's (1980) conceptualisation of sectarian division in Northern Ireland as located in the "substructure" of the society, on a par with class division, is very strong. These are analyses based on claims for the explanatory power of divisions between "non-class based material interests" (Saunders, 1984, p. 206). Both approaches explain social conflict and change with reference to sections of a class achieving superior access to means of consumption, especially housing, through "sectoral" struggles within the class, and that this can outweigh class membership in its economic and political effects. For purposes of further criticism, the two approaches can be taken together.

The idea of "sectoral" struggles bears close resemblance to Giddens' (1984) concept of power, which suggests how one sector is able to dominate another outside of class relations. The "media" of power are "allocative resources", such as means of production and reproduction,

and "authoritative resources", such as means for the co-ordination of people in their different activities and the distribution of life chances. Structures of domination are made up of these two sorts of resources, and "knowledgeable agents" draw upon and reproduce them in their social interactions. However, while this constitutes an analysis of what power is, it still does not explain on what basis power comes to be distributed differentially among and within the working class, management or the bourgeoisie. This criticism can be applied to consumption sectors: the success or otherwise of particular groups in meeting their needs and wants does not take place in the context of an objective social reality. For marxists, reality is pre-structured by the powerful system forces of capitalism and its managerial strategies. Thus, the division and fragmentation of the working class in the UK, and the differential consumption of the products of flexible accumulation, are aspects of capitalist reproduction. They are less marked in states where organised labour is strong, such as Sweden (Olofsson, 1985).

Urry, in Lash and Urry (1987), appears to revise his position in an explicit distancing from the "end of the working class" thesis of Gorz (1982), arguing that class struggle has not disappeared, been marginalised or eclipsed by new social struggles, but has become more sectional with the end of organised capitalism. While continuing to distinguish between "working class struggle" and "new social movements", Lash and Urry suggest a "transformational oppositional culture" based on an alliance between these forces (p. 8). This is essentially a refinement of marxist theory rather than a rejection of the relevance of marxism in explanations of recent developments.

Capitalism as the fundamental determinant of social existence, and specifically the wage labour-capital relationship, is at the centre of all marxist theory. But can this most abstract of concepts be a starting point for explanation? The purpose of using comparative method in the present thesis is to explore this question by using this marxist approach as a basis for constructing a coherent description and explanation of the research problem. The concept can be reformulated at lower levels of abstraction. Byrne and Parson (1983) conclude that the autonomy and living standards of different sections of the working class depend on their position in the wage labour-capital relationship; whether, for example, their skills are seen as essential by management or they can exercise power in the labour market by means of organisation and exclusion (see also Barbalet, 1982). However, in contemporary UK capitalist society, millions of people are actually outside the wage labour-capital relationship, i.e. unemployed, at any point in time. Byrne (1986) considers their position in terms of the concept of the "social proletariat". This is the marginalised working class whose experience is more one of social security, state housing and insecure employment than formal, permanent employment and home ownership. He argues that the social proletariat is reproduced within capitalist relations of production as reserve labour - over-represented in the worst housing areas and managed by "poverty professionals". Byrne does not use the example, but the most explicit aspect of this process is the re-assertion of the poor law principle of "less eligibility" which has accompanied the expansion of the sphere of circulation and the contraction of the sphere of reproduction in recent years of Thatcherism (Loney, 1986). Increasingly state provision for the "surplus

population" who cannot get the price for their labour power necessary to buy what they need has been relegated to a residual role, and even transferred to charitable provision, most notably in the case of housing (Forrest and Murie, 1986). While, for example, home owners are regarded as "self-reliant", state tenants are "dependent", and this appears to legitimize policies that support the former (tax relief, grants, promotion) and "save" the latter from continuing dependency (reducing general subsidies, recommodifying, transferring ownership, encouraging self-help, etc.).

Harvey (1987) treats change in regimes of capital accumulation as of crucial importance in determining state policies and actions in civil society. But his analysis is to a large extent "capital-logic" in the sense of looking to the strategies of capital for explanations of events. While Harvey recognises that capital is not unified and is composed of often conflicting fractions, even though certain "system forces" may be clearly dominant (such as the strategies of transnational corporations or international finance capital), and that the state is also not a unified entity in capitalist society, his analysis does not consider the autonomous power of the working class - itself, of course, divided - as a generative mechanism in bringing about crisis in the system. By contrast, Cleaver (1979) places the ability of workers to disrupt capitalism from within at the centre of his analysis of capitalist crisis. While this autonomy is a constant threat, the system is obviously not always in crisis but crisis-prone. Mass politics in the UK has generally been about the nature of the state's mediation of capitalism rather than direct challenges that may be posed by more local

or sectional struggles. Cockburn's (1977) work in particular stressed the local state's role in crisis avoidance through the management of the working class, including the management of conflict and the organisation of social reproduction, but again she tended to explain this in terms of capital-logic (see Duncan and Goodwin, 1982, for a critique). Cleaver's (1979) work presents one of strongest statements within marxism against the view that events can be explained with reference to capital logic. In place of the logic of capital he puts the balance of social forces, which in his analysis is determined by the course of struggle about the subordination of the working class to the wage labour-capital relationship.

The case studies of redevelopment in County Durham show how local councils under Labour control and still committed to social democratic modernisation in housing policies were clearly pursuing an anomalous approach in the context of the early post-modernism of the central state in the early 1980s. The situation had to be resolved through political processes within the state apparatus. The fact that ultimate state power was in the hands of the "post-modern" New Right while the local state in County Durham was still "modernist" reflected the dimensions of the state's penetration by contending social forces. The intervention of the central state, against municipal provision and in favour of "self reliance" and "the individual", decided the issue in one case (chapter 5), while in another the local council succeeded in avoiding such direct intervention but was forced to conform to early post-modern housing solutions by other means (chapter 6). In addition, community action did not meet the same type of response from the state in every case. For



example, in the village of Langley Park a central government department intervened and supported the residents against the local council (chapter 5), but in the new town of Peterlee community action received no support from the local council or central government, despite the council's calls for more resources to deal with its housing problems (chapter 4), and in Craigavon attempts were made to incorporate community action into local housing management (chapter 8).

Some indications about why this should be so are to be found in Williams (1973). He argues that the response of the "dominant culture" depends on whether it has an interest at stake, and to what extent - it will respond accordingly by ignoring, incorporating or extirpating practices and meanings outside or against the dominant mode. Similarly Kraushaar (1981) discusses how state responses vary according to the extent to which the practices and meanings conflict with the reproduction of the dominant social order. Williams (1973) suggests that state actions in the "superstructure" (the cultural realm) are crucial for the reproduction of the "base" (the economic realm), although the base ultimately exerts determining pressures on what is possible in the superstructure without revolutionary transformation. Modernisation is a very good example.

A strategy such as modernisation may have ideological aspects which continue after the strategy is abandoned by dominant economic and political institutions as too costly and ineffective. This appears to have been the case in County Durham. The final break with the corporatist/social democratic Keynesian Welfare State at a national

level in 1979 meant that political support and, crucially, funding for modernisation policies were largely abandoned (the "early post-modern" phase described above). However, in Durham the two local authorities involved in the case studies of redevelopment in the early 1980s remained ideologically committed to modernising housing policy, which was seen to be improving local conditions for the working class through slum clearance and council housing. This ideology was a product of the post-war settlement between labour and capital, even though there were conflicts about housing quality and subsidies. By the late 1970s restructuring for capital appeared to demand a new strategy of re-asserting privatised consumption, self-reliance and the strong state: the social market economy (Gamble, 1980). Local government action was curtailed accordingly by central legislative and administrative mechanisms. But the modernisation strategy could not claim to have popular support in County Durham, or North Armagh, and the actual experience of it, as distinct from the ideology surrounding it, was negative for many people.

The above discussion indicates how the state itself disorganised as the modernisation era ended. As Lash and Urry (1987, pp. 10-11) point out, a feature of modernisation was the extent not only of the spatial concentration of means of production and reproduction but also of the role of the corporate state in organising this. Chapter 2 shows how planning strategy in the modernisation era deliberately concentrated labour and its means of reproduction in "growth centres" in County Durham and North Armagh. "Disorganised capitalism", however, has seen a spatial scattering or deconcentration of large firms' various production

processes and an increase in the number of small enterprises often dependent on them. The transition is summarised by Lash and Urry (1987, pp. 306-307) as follows:

"(D)uring the period of organized capitalism a particular 'spatial fix' got established between the dominant manufacturing/extractive industries, major industrial cities, particular regions dominated by such industries, and labour and capital 'organised' in a given structural pattern ... Major spatial and industrial changes of a disorganizing kind occurred in Britain from the 1960s onwards: these include the collapse of spatially concentrated manufacturing employment; the increase in service employment which is more spatially dispersed; the decline in population in the cities and the extensive process of 'counter-urbanization'; the shifting of industry away from the major urban centres especially in the north and west of Britain; the reduced significance of 'regions' as any sort of organizational entity and the central importance of local variation; increases in the number of smaller plants, enterprises, home-workers and the self-employed; the 'unbundling' and development of specialized producer services firms; the flattening out of trade unionism between different areas; and the declining significance of the 'city' for oppositional activity."

The disorganisation of capitalism saw the relaxation of "growth centre" strategy in County Durham and North Armagh and an emphasis on "entrepreneurial" planning in local areas. It is argued in the present study that it was this shift away from modernisation, which had been a response to organised capitalism, and which Durham County Council especially saw as vital to the growth of the region, that required the disorganisation of the "modern" state: the emasculation of local government, the running down or disbandment of new town development corporations and the abandonment of corporatism for example. The situation in North Armagh was complicated by the problem of managing sectarian conflict, but the same trends are evident. The "early post-modern" state is characterised by a centralisation of state power within

a "strong state/free market" framework and a growth in the roles of quasi-governmental agencies and private sector-public sector partnerships. A major purpose of this thesis is to show how the "disorganisation" of the "modern" state in County Durham and North Armagh brought about changes in housing and planning which re-orientated policies from modernisation to post-modern or disorganised capitalism, considerably altering the housing and planning scenario which community action faced.

These processes were experienced in "localities", which is the level at which fieldwork was focused. So it will be useful at this stage to explore the concept of "locality" before taking this introductory discussion further.

### 1.6 Locality

Williams (1983) attaches much importance to local social relations in working class culture. There is in his work a suggestion that the struggle between labour and capital is reflected in struggles between "communities" and non-local institutions, especially the transnational corporations and the nation state. The community is for Williams those local social relations through which people "do and must live"; "immediate and actual groupings" which have been subordinated to the domination of nation states and corporations which are in "contradiction" and not "significant continuity" with these more limited but much more human relationships and "placeable bondings" (Williams, 1983, pp. 179-180). This analysis seems to have potential for helping

to explain why modernisation met with community action in County Durham and North Armagh; why there was a contest of domains between local state and local civil society, rather than a continuity.

Sandercock (1985) writes in a similar vein about localities as "life spaces", threatened by the creation and destruction of "economic spaces" by capital. In the case study of Peterlee (chapter 4) it is shown how the new town was actually built as a new "life space" to replace the old pit villages, before the pit closures of the 1950s and '60s which badly eroded the "economic space" of the area. In most other cases modernisation strategies attempted to rebuild "economic spaces" in the growth centres which would replace capital's "redundant spaces" in the old industrial villages and towns, only for these in turn to be marginalised as branch plants declined (Austrin and Beynon, 1979; Parson, 1981). Local struggles to defend the economic and social spaces of localities from this "nomad capitalism" often take the form of cross-class spatial coalitions in response to uneven development at various scales (Pickvance, 1985). The struggles are essentially against the "logic" of capital, which decides what is and is not "economic". As Thompson (1978) writes:

"... while one form which opposition to capitalism takes is in direct economic antagonism - resistance to exploitation whether as producer or consumer - another form is, exactly, resistance to capitalism's innate tendency to reduce all human relationships to economic definitions ... " (Thompson, 1978, p. 84).

Economic, social and technological changes wrought by capitalist restructuring have broken up many "communities" in the traditional

sense, processes in which planning on behalf of capital has been deeply implicated (see, for example, Wiener's (1980) study of the process in Northern Ireland; the accounts of Snowdon (1979) and Durham Strong Words Collective (1979) of the destruction of "communities" in County Durham; and the discussion by Williams (1985) of the miners' struggle of 1985/86 to save their communities). Thus, the locality is where restructuring may be experienced and resistance may be based. This resistance appears generally to occur in response to the disruption of civil society. Thus, a critique of modernisation (and post-modernism) seems to have to begin in the realities of place and community.

The significance of "locale" in the "constitution of society" has been examined by Giddens (1984). He develops the concept in terms of the locality as the site of social reproduction, but with knowledgeable social actors shaping as well as being shaped by the processes in which they are located. He too emphasises the social importance of the locality:

"Feelings of identifications with larger locales - regions, nations, etc. - seem distinguishable from those bred and reinforced by the localized contexts of day-to-day life. The latter are probably much more important in respect of the reproduction of large-scale institutions than are the former" (p. 367).

This echoes Williams (1983), not just in terms of dominant ideologies which attempt to construct a prime popular identification with the nation state or the large corporation, rather than with "locales", but also in terms of the need for the state to become involved in local civil society to reproduce the conditions for a cumulation and

reproduction given the imperatives of the system at the time. However these perspectives, and particularly the work of Giddens, have been strongly criticised. Saunders (1986b) argues that they over-emphasise space and give it generative status, when space in fact only enters into processes of social change in a contingent way. There is, he suggests, no centrality of space to social theory:

"Just as social life has to a large extent transcended the temporal dimension (e.g. we may work at night as well as in the day, and the rhythm of social life does not vary much between winter and summer), so too it has transcended the spatial dimension. What happens in a particular place is largely determined, not by the character of the place itself, but by the operation of the land market and the intervention of the state (p. 283; emphasis added).

Saunders acknowledges that social processes work out differently across space according to specific conjunctures of relations which occur in different places, but argues that this constitutes a contingent status for location, not a key status for it in analysis.

This debate is about the role of "locality" in causal mechanisms. Clearly many determinations are at work in localities, as is shown in the case studies. At a general level, Jessop (1982) suggests a realist schema for organising how such determinations may be analysed. He conceptualises a gradation from "abstract determinations" to the "real concrete". "Abstract determinations" are powers, tendencies, counter-tendencies, etc. The "real concrete" is stratified into various layers and regions at which specific mechanisms generate actual agents and events.

This approach may help with the analysis of community action about redevelopment. Class struggle about reproduction in the industrial city and successive legislation requiring local authorities to take action against unfit or substandard housing might be postulated as the necessary generative mechanism (Merrett, 1979, pp. 3-62). In this way the state acts to reproduce labour in conditions that improve productivity, reduce class conflict and assist the functioning of the housing market by sustaining exchange values and undertaking unprofitable functions. However such action may cause conflict if it extends into "near slums" where residents want to continue living (Dennis, 1970; 1972; Byrne, Harrison, Keithley and McCarthy, 1986, pp. 24-30). Opposition may be due to the social and financial costs borne by the displaced residents (contingent factors). For collective action to occur, however, residents have to consider that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, and there have to be the resources and structures to enable the action (in Tilly's (1978) terms, material interests alone are not sufficient to produce protest; there also has to be organisation, mobilization and opportunity).

This can also work the other way round, and in fact the nature of local struggles may be turning full circle. In recent years the state has reduced the scale of action to improve the quality, quantity and general affordability of good housing, and standards have fallen (Ball, 1985). One consequence is that the issue of "unhealthy" housing areas is re-emerging (Byrne, Harrison, Keithley and McCarthy, 1986). And judging by the various reports in magazines such as Community Action and Roof the issue has seen a rise of community action about health and housing (for



a discussion in relation to West Belfast, see Blackman, Evason, Melaugh and Woods, 1987, pp. 1-18).

Even if the locality is contingent, it has so far in this discussion not been made clear what "locality" is. Duncan (1986) considers the problem of definition. He criticises the vagueness of the term as it has often been used. The concept has been employed to denote passive local variation, the local context of social action, the context which causes social action or a combination of all of these. There has often been an unexamined import of implicit ideas of social cohesion and autonomy into what are essentially case study areas until they can be shown to be anything else, such as a "community". He argues that locality has been used as a conceptual gap-filler:

"But if we see general processes as spatial processes which are constituted in numerous local areas, then the need for such a conceptual gap-filler disappears. Locality is then only important if and when locality effects are part of the causal group explaining any event. And locality may well not be important." (pp. 29-30)

However, Urry (1981b; 1986) argues that locality does matter, and increasingly so given recent changes in the UK's urban and regional structures. His argument is that processes internal to local areas generate concrete outcomes, and thus the nature of the locality is of great importance in explaining social phenomena. He gives the example of large firms making decisions on the basis of local conditions, and the variation in responses to their strategies, such as in the allocation of local state expenditures, which depend on local economic and political conditions.

It is suggested that this apparent disagreement can be resolved by separating what has been referred to above as the "system forces" of capitalism (or Jessop's "abstract determinations") from the experiences of these forces, often mediated by the state, in local areas (civil society). Action based on these experiences may in turn bring about change in the system forces. Taylor (1985) makes precisely this point, both explicitly and in the way his book Political Geography: world-economy, nation-state and locality is organised. Introducing his final section, "the political geography of localities", he writes:

"We have reached the scale of experience in our framework for political geography. The range of this scale is defined by the day-to-day activities of people in the ordinary business of their lives ... From our perspective localities are important since they provide different experiences for their populations and these will have political implications." (pp. 184, 193)

Localities are commonly where the effects of the movements of capital or central government policies are experienced. Resulting locally-based reactions may feed into national currents. For example, the formation of the British Labour Party around the turn of the century as a vehicle for the working class to take control of the nation state had important origins in localities (Samuel, 1985), although at the same time to build the party spatial constraints had to be overcome. It is suggested in subsequent chapters that a crucial change occurred in this process with post-war modernisation: labour leaders became so incorporated in modernisation and expanding local expenditures that they had no real constituency, just an abstraction of the working class interest which

was used to justify rolling over opposition in actual working class communities.

The prime functions of the capitalist state, in accumulation and legitimation, demand spatial policies, both to appropriate space where necessary, or to dominate space. The capitalist state enters into actual and organised relationships over relevant local areas to undertake these functions, operating within the structural pressures of the accumulation strategies of capital and popular resistance to the exploitation and domination these require. Structures and mechanisms of management put in place at local level may become arenas of struggle. However these struggles cannot be analysed solely at the local level. As Ball (1983, pp. 259, 246) writes in regard to the planning machinery:

"To treat the politics of planning in such parochial terms, however, denies the spatial consequences of social change. Land-use planning is a specific intervention by the state in the built environment and its spatial organization. Local political struggles over planning policy are part of much wider conflicts over the nature of society and who controls it ... Changes in the planning system cannot be divorced from the long-term crisis of British capitalism and the spatial restructuring associated with it."

Given the importance of the forms of relation between civil society and political authority, or "people-officialdom" relations, in issues of control and restructuring, the penultimate section of this chapter is devoted to the question of the state.

### 1.7 The state

An exhaustive account of competing theoretical perspectives on the state would be beyond the scope of this thesis (the development of debate on the subject is illustrated by Gold, Lo and Wright, 1975; Frankel, 1979; Held et al, 1983; Jessop, 1982; 1985; for Northern Ireland see Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979; O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson, 1980; Bew and Patterson, 1985). The purpose of this section is to consider the relevance to the present project of two aspects of the state considered in the recent work of Jessop, namely "people-officialdom" relations and "two nations" strategy. There are two main reasons why these are important to a study of "community action" about modernisation in housing and planning. The first is that modernisation was associated with a top-down "statist" conception of reform which, because of the ways in which it subordinated people to the state and bureaucracy, was often unpopular. Much of the success of the New Right has been explained in terms of its radical critique of modernisation and "statist" reform (see especially Hall, 1983). The second is that modernisation was also associated with "one nation" social democracy in Labour and Tory versions. A feature of post-modern times has been the growth of a "second nation" excluded from good jobs and owner-occupied housing and marginalised as reserve and peripheral labour accommodated in residualised social housing. For these groups the experience of the state is frequently still one of domination and bureaucracy.

Chapter 2 is an account of structural pressures which shaped the nature of local state involvement in civil society, with specific reference to

housing and planning policies. This is followed by case studies which show how these policies worked out in local areas where there were conflicts about housing provision between community groups and the local state. Central-local government relations were of considerable importance in determining the outcome of these conflicts. None of these struggles were powerful political challenges; what they do is illustrate how relatively low-level protest was managed in a fairly routine fashion, and how the outcomes may be explained in terms of the changing nature of state-civil society relations as early post-modernism superceded modernisation.

Over the post-war period a growing number of interventionist state bodies were corporatist in form, for example regional economic planning councils, new town development corporations, NHS authorities, the 1974 re-organisation of local government and in recent years housing, planning and educational/training agencies (Cockburn, 1978; Panitch, 1986, pp. 160-186; Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1983). In Northern Ireland the reform of local government which occurred in 1973 radically extended corporatist forms of administration following the Macrory Report (Birrell and Murie, 1980, pp. 155-190). Housing had been brought under the control of a quasi-governmental agency, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, in 1971 following civil rights protests about discrimination by Unionist local councils.

The development of the corporatist state in the UK occurred with the growing complexity of managing public spending and public protest (see Dearlove, 1979). With the end of the post-war boom, high and growing

levels of state spending on social investment and social consumption were difficult to sustain, especially as the type of provision was often decommodified and social expenses were escalating with unemployment caused by capitalist restructuring. Not only this - modernisation had failed to win mass commitment and was often experienced as "statism". The way was paved for Thatcherism as "the way out of the crisis". Central government intervened much more directly in the local state following Thatcher's election victory of 1979. The abandonment of social democratic corporatism and Keynesianism/Labourism saw increasing fragmentation and division not just in civil society and the economy, but also within branches of the state system (Jessop, 1985, pp. 126-127). As Jessop (1982, p. 235) observes:

"In so far as a given state fails to secure the general external conditions of production ... then economic crisis can be anticipated. It will then be subject to various pressures to respond to such crises - pressures which may involve demands for more government intervention, new kinds of intervention, or even disengagement and resort to private, market-generated solutions ... (T)he state responds to the political repercussions of crisis and not to the economic crisis (or crises) as such ... The extent to which a state actually succeeds in maintaining, restoring, or strengthening the various conditions necessary for accumulation must always be established in each conjuncture."

Hall (1983) argues that during the 1970s these conditions had to be secured by shifting towards a coercive, disciplinary state system at the expense of a consensual, hegemonic state system in the UK. This, he posits, was achieved within a mass democracy through "authoritarian populism", which capitalised on the failures of social democratic corporatism by counter-posing a politics of market = free choice = freedom and liberty = anti-statism = end creeping collectivism. This

was an appeal to the large numbers of people excluded from, and managed by, corporatist structures. However Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley and Ling (1984) challenge this point of view, arguing that Thatcherism is not hegemonic but is rather a "two nations project". Jessop (1982, p. 244) described this strategy in earlier work as follows:

"... 'one nation' strategies aim at an expansive hegemony in which the support of the entire population is mobilised through material concessions and symbolic rewards (as in 'social imperialism' or the 'Keynesian-welfare state' projects). In contrast 'two nations' strategies aim at a more limited hegemony concerned to mobilise the support of strategically significant sectors of the population and pass the costs of the project to other sectors (as in fascism or monetarism)."

The "two nations" concept is a useful analytical tool. Jessop's analysis is that "two nations" strategies arise in times of economic recession when general economic expansion cannot generate "one nation" growth. The state intervenes to favour sections of the population according to political calculation and economic demands. In housing the creation of "two nations" was well advanced by the early 1980s with the general polarization between state housing and owner-occupied housing; selective state intervention favoured the market and self-help at the expense of collective state provision and a professional housing service (see Labour Housing Group, 1984). Jessop (1982, p. 244) describes the general process as follows:

"... 'two nations' projects require containment and even repression of the 'other nation' at the same time as they involve selective access and concessions for the more 'favoured nation'. This is associated with attempts to reorganise the bases of political support to reflect a vertical, antagonistic cleavage between the 'productive' and the 'parasitic' in economic terms and/or the

'loyal' and the 'disloyal' in political terms and/or the 'civilised' and the 'uncivilised' in terms of civil society." (emphasis added)

Although social democratic corporatism was a central element of the "one nation" project of post-war governments, the incorporation of labour at leadership level effectively excluded the mass of working people from participation in state structures (Panitch, 1986, pp. 160-186).

However, significant gains were made through this arrangement, and the trade union offensives within corporatism in the 1970s appeared to be the cause of capital's demands for a drastic reduction of trade union power (Panitch, 1986; see also Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley and Ling, 1984; and Thompson, 1978, pp. 35-91). Panitch (1986, pp. 1-55) argues that the exclusion of the mass of people from the political structures of the Keynesian Welfare State meant that it was impossible to create a popular perception of the counter-attack on it and the need to defend and expand the principles on which it was based. The corporatism of the Labour Party in power (locally and centrally) in the 1940s-1970s obstructed participatory politics; post-war reconstruction and social reform were for the welfare of, rather than by the agency of, the working class. Labour politics in County Durham was of this mode. It made assumptions about how working class needs should be met which in some working class localities were not what people wanted.

In Northern Ireland this disengagement was carried out very explicitly to remove state power from contending forces in civil society. Within Northern Ireland state power had been used by the Orange bourgeoisie to discriminate against a "second nation" of catholics and prevent working



class unity (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979; Bew and Patterson, 1985). With the introduction of Direct Rule state power was delocalised to a greater extent than in Britain, so that the government of Northern Ireland became much more clearly concerned with reproducing the working class and managing conflict outside any real process of democracy (see Byrne, 1980).

The complex nature of different branches of the state system and their relationships with varied local civil societies in organising socio-economic and cultural practices cannot be analysed with a crude conception of the capitalist state, or a theory which reifies the state. However, as Jessop (1985) and Williams (1973) argue, there are determining pressures on state action which originate from the nature of the state's relationship to capital and to civil society. Two areas in civil society where state involvement is necessary have been identified: circulation and reproduction (as defined by Urry, 1981a). The state also intervenes in a "sphere of struggle". The community struggles studied in the present thesis have been conceptualised as a "contest of domains". Functions devolved to local government mean that it has to enter into different types of relationship with different local civil societies. These may also be affected by the way functions are carried out. Modernisation in County Durham and North Armagh involved such a structuring of relationships with communities, depending on the character of their localities and their position within strategic spatial policy. The issue of the exclusion of certain communities affected by these functions from decision-making may not be simply a question of local democracy versus the administration of services

outside local democracy. It is also likely to be a question of the structure of the local state, the nature of local politics and the resources available to groups in civil society.

These aspects will shape the nature of "people-officialdom" relations (Jessop, 1982, p. 247). "The people" are the social objects of state intervention in civil society. "Officialdom" is the agents of intervention in the state. Class relations do not necessarily correspond with political relations. For example, the case studies show how the working class in the political form of Labour councils in County Durham conflicted with working class residents in civil society. As Jessop (p. 251) writes, the spheres of "state/civil society relations and state/subject relations constitute the field par excellence for ... 'popular (-democratic)' struggles". At first sight this may seem to bear close resemblance to Pahl's (1970) managerial thesis. However Jessop's (1982) concept of "people-officialdom" relations is much more firmly located in an analytical framework which explains the nature of the state in terms of the nature of the capitalist system and the overall constraints this imposes on state action beyond a reproduction function (see also O'Connor, 1981; Cleaver, 1979). It was precisely this aspect - that urban managerialism neglected the ultimate constraints on the immediate managers of urban resources - which limited Pahl's thesis (Taylor, 1985, pp. 189-191). For Jessop (1982) "people-officialdom" relations are relevant in the theoretical analysis of the capitalist state

"... only in so far as they serve as conditions of existence of economic reproduction and/or are themselves affected by economic

relations. Thus the relations among political categories are not per se class relations but they may well be class-relevant relations and/or be overdetermined by class relations" (p. 247).

An aim of this thesis, in addressing its central problem, is to research community action in terms of the "conditions of existence of economic reproduction" as these shifted from modernisation to early post-modernism.

### 1.8 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research problem and how the present thesis addresses it methodologically and conceptually. The thesis is concerned with the problem of how to analyse cases of community action about housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh. The problem is conceptualised in terms of contesting domains of the local state and civil society within the structural pressures created by capital accumulation strategies and central government policies over the period from "modern" or "organised" capitalism to "post-modern" or "disorganised" capitalism. Using a series of case studies, the thesis examines what social actors actually did during this period in struggles about housing and planning "modernisation", what happened in the localities where these struggles occurred, and how what happened might be related to a conceptual framework.

The present chapter has argued that capitalism is the prime determinant of social existence in UK society, and that it follows that a major function of the capitalist state is the management of the working class

which, in varied and sometimes conflicting ways in which "locality" can play an important role, enters into struggle against the reduction of social existence to the logic of capital. The changing system forces of this mode of production, particularly the transition from organised to disorganised capitalism in the UK, appear to have determined particular state strategies for housing and planning in County Durham and North Armagh which are referred to as "modernisation" and "early post-modernism". The consensus about modernisation ensured relatively harmonious relationships between central government and an expanding local government system based on organised capitalism and growth. But the process of disorganisation and the imposition of early post-modern restructuring, which particularly affected local government, saw growing conflict between central government and elected local government. The expression of these strategies and conflicts in planning and housing policy is discussed in chapter 2.

It is suggested that the strategy of modernisation shaped the nature of planning and housing policy in County Durham and North Armagh during the post-war period until the 1970s. However, relationships between local councils and "communities" affected by modernisation and the continuation of modernising policies were far from consensual. The costs imposed on working class communities resulted in community action against the policies. Subsequent chapters show that elements of the modernisation strategy continued in the local state in County Durham and North Armagh after it had been superseded at national level by early post-modern policies in housing and planning.

It was suggested that early post-modern policies were elements of what Jessop has termed a "two nations project", in contrast to the "one nation project" of the modernisation era. The policies expanded the sphere of circulation while reducing the sphere of reproduction. This shift involved stimulating privatised rather than collective consumption, and self-provisioning/self-reliance rather than public services. The transition appears to have been determined by wider economic pressures.

This thesis is centrally concerned with the history of the working class experience of state intervention in housing and planning, and in particular the experience of community action about housing and planning. This history, as described in chapters 3 to 8, is used to inform the concepts developed in the present chapter and to work towards a more refined understanding in the final chapter of what happened, drawing out its implications for academic and political practice.

The community action studied met with different state responses. It is proposed that these responses may be conceptualised in terms of state management along a "people-officialdom" axis of determination, which - despite Lash and Urry's (1987) contention about the heightened importance of division between the "people" and the "state" in "disorganised" capitalism - appears to have been of considerable significance in both the modernisation and post-modern eras in managing the implementation of appropriate policies. The nature of this relationship is important in understanding the way the state performs its functions. The axis appears necessary because the local state is

expected to respond to the needs of capital and to legitimate this in managerial/technical terms. To examine this idea in more detail, the following chapter addresses the generative processes thought to underlie conflicts between people and officialdom in County Durham and North Armagh during both the "modernisation" and the "early post-modern" eras.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RISE AND FALL OF MODERNISATION

This chapter sets the scene for the case studies which follow. It discusses the origins of modernisation in housing and planning policies in County Durham and North Armagh, the nature of these policies and the changes that occurred to constitute the end of the "modernisation era". It is a historical chapter, largely based on original documentary research. It sets out the housing and planning context of the case studies of community action presented in subsequent chapters. This involves showing how modernisation came to be expressed in local land-use and strategic plans and in state housing, how it was abandoned through a series of policy changes, and ultimately replaced by planning frameworks for rationalisation and strengthening markets, and the expansion of commodification and self-help into housing provision. These changes were accompanied by increasing central restraints on local councils in County Durham. In Northern Ireland local policy responded more directly to central pressures under Direct Rule, but reflected concerns about not being seen to abandon tackling serious housing problems and legitimating policy changes. In both areas there were housing struggles in civil society arising from the impact of modernisation, and as the context changed at the end of this era, so did the nature of housing struggles and the structures of opportunities and constraints in which they were located.

The main conclusion which this chapter works towards is that civil society, rather than being an autonomous sphere, was a sphere of reproduction struggles in County Durham and North Armagh (the "contest of domains" described in chapter 1). In both areas it is argued that the local state was incorporated into a strategy of modernising the "social factory". Although this strategy appeared to be a state response to the imperatives of "organised" capitalism, it also promised "a better future" for the working class.

As well as a physical and spatial strategy, modernisation in housing and planning was an ideology which claimed that the needs of capital were also the needs of the working class. The present chapter attempts to demonstrate this by considering relevant aspects of the political history of the two areas, particularly the process of incorporation, which left many small communities excluded from decisions about far-ranging changes in their localities - even the destruction of those localities - and created new "communities" which were little more than "urban reservations". This restructuring is shown to be dominated by the needs of capital. Community action was a response to the experience of housing policy during modernisation; what housing policy became in "post-modernism" presented a "way out" for some groups, such as working class owner-occupiers in older areas faced with redevelopment under modernisation, and a "trap" for others, such as marginalised local authority tenants living in "modern" mass housing. Thus, these struggles were essentially about the conditions under which reproduction would take place, especially in terms of the form, tenure and location



of housing. How the state responded was very much shaped by the wider transition to post-modern policies.

It might be concluded from this introduction that to accept the existence of "civil society" at all is inaccurate, as it is in reality the "social factory" of capitalism. This, of course, was essentially the position of early Poulantzas (1973), whose structuralist analysis had no room for civil society as a separate sphere from the capitalist state and the relations of production. Urry (1981a) rejects this analysis and, as discussed in chapter 1, argues that civil society consists of spheres of circulation, reproduction and struggle which are "between" the state and the economy. In other words, civil society is the everyday world where goods and services are sold, bought and consumed, labour power reproduced and struggles about consumption/reproduction occur. As also discussed in chapter 1, the experience of the modernisation era in County Durham and North Armagh was dominated by reproduction in Urry's sense of state policy and action based on the idealism of universal interests, while post-modernism saw an expansion of circulation into areas partially decommmodified under modernisation - particularly housing - and the breaking down of a universal "one nation" ideology. In a general sense, both are reproductive processes and the struggles which occurred in both eras were essentially struggles about the conditions of reproduction, thus decreasing the significance of civil society as a separate sphere (see Frankel, 1987, pp. 202-206). Civil society, though, still seems to be a useful methodological device for the purposes of the present thesis. It is used to distinguish between the state and the sphere of "private"

everyday relations and practices within and between households in which the state intervenes and out of which struggles about this intervention may emerge. As suggested in chapter 1, this helps to specify the distinctiveness of "the local" as opposed to national/international forces, and the possibility of contradictions between these levels.

Modernisation did not end in a clear-cut fashion, and was itself essentially restructured by changes in policy and expenditure during the 1970s, which was a period of transition between modernisation and early post-modernism. In County Durham modernisation was moderated through community and district council pressure on a county council strategy which was increasingly difficult to legitimate, and later abandoned as a result of central government intervention. In North Armagh central government adjusted strategic plans to "early post-modernism", although Housing Executive policy retained a strong modernising element as its allocations were not as severely cut back as English local councils. While these changes were results of the exercise of political authority, the position of "modernisers" in the late 1970s appeared to be at odds with both the working class experience of modernisation as "statist" and, in many localities, destructive of use values, exchange values and "community supports" in local civil society, and the failure of large-scale modernisation to deliver economic growth and a better quality of life in either County Durham or North Armagh. "Post-modernism" could both seek legitimacy on this basis, and develop policies more "appropriate" to the needs of capital in the 1980s.

## 2.1 The political origins of modernisation

North Armagh and County Durham are areas now on the industrial periphery of the UK. Production in some of the basic industries of imperial Britain for long structured economic and social life in these areas, and the pattern of settlement. Both were industrial heartlands of nineteenth century accumulation, producing coal and linen respectively. In 1911, 46 per cent of male workers (but only 1 per cent of female workers) in County Durham were enumerated by the Census as employed in the coal industry. Excluding the main urban centres, 61 per cent of male workers were in the coal industry. In County Armagh 13 per cent of male workers were enumerated by the 1911 Census as employed in textiles, and 48 per cent of females workers (2). In the main linen centres of Lurgan and Portadown in North Armagh, 42 per cent of all workers were in textiles according to the Census, and Mid-Ulster's textile and clothing sector, which centred on these two towns, contained 21 per cent of the total six county workforce in employment (Hall, 1986, p. 108).

The County Durham pit settlements were "class communities", with a homogeneous working class political culture based on the need for solidarity and loyalty, although with a clear separation of roles between the sexes (Chaplin, 1978; Williamson, 1982a). In North Armagh the working class was differentiated as a result of the history of colonisation and industrial development in the North East of Ireland. This created a skilled male workforce, overwhelmingly protestant and unionist, and an unskilled workforce which was overwhelmingly catholic and nationalist (Hall, 1986, pp. 94-137). A clientelist "class

alliance" was constructed between the protestant bourgeoisie and the protestant working class based on protestant workers' and protestant capital's mutual interests in maintaining the union with Britain in the face of Irish nationalism. This entailed, among other things, material concessions on wages and conditions to prevent a class fracturing of the unionist bloc (McLaughlin, 1980; Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979; Probert, 1978; Purdie, 1983).

In County Durham there was no such strong base for differentiation within the male industrial working class, and the rise of the British Labour Party united the class around universalist demands (Samuel, 1985; Byrne and Parson, 1983). In Northern Ireland the Labour project never succeeded in overcoming what was in effect a regional two-nations strategy of its bourgeoisie (Walker, 1985; Devlin, 1981; see also chapter 1). An important consequence of this situation was the prolonged survival of the protestant petit bourgeoisie in local government in Northern Ireland, where it could protect its housing and property interests. This group effectively blocked centralised planning in the province until the mid-1960s, when its power was much weaker as a result of economic restructuring (Wiener, 1980; see also subsequent discussion). In North East England, by contrast, the petit bourgeoisie was largely eliminated from local government by 1945 as a result of the political successes of the Labour Party (Byrne, 1982).

The centrality of the skilled protestant worker in Northern Ireland had major implications in the sphere of reproduction/consumption. Not only did protestants achieve superior access to employment, but also to

housing. Clientelism often "delivered the goods", made possible by the Unionist Party's continual control of the Stormont Parliament and all but a few local councils. Although complicated by the fact that unskilled protestants were far from privileged under unionism, but nevertheless generally believed that acquiescence to the unionist ruling class was morally appropriate, protestant workers' acceptance of the class alliance was essentially a strategy of a fraction of the working class in relation to regionally-based capital (Hall, 1986, pp. 1-51).

In Northern Ireland, what appeared to be a "consumption cleavage" in housing along sectarian lines was in fact ultimately rooted in the strength of a politically and economically central section of the working class. As Harloe (1984), drawing on Barbalet's (1982) work on "exclusionary closure", concludes, the capacity to resist exploitation under capitalism is unevenly distributed through the working class. Groups of workers may take advantage of political or economic strength to improve their position in consumption, even if this is actually achieved through closure against other groups. This is not to suggest that workers' demands, especially of the labour movement, were generally for such selective privilege, even in Northern Ireland. As in Britain the protestant working class after the second world war pressed with marked success for universalist welfare provision that would inevitably benefit the class as a whole (Hall, 1986; Walker, 1985; Byrne, 1979; Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979). Rather, exclusionary closure may appear as a response to competition for jobs and housing when universalist demands have failed. The "two-nations" strategy should be interpreted as the ruling class's response to these demands, selectively

favouring politically and economically key groups while reproducing the wage labour-capital relationship.

In County Durham capital was confronted by a largely homogeneous working class and universalist demands were much more difficult to resist politically. But in the same way that the unionist bourgeoisie attempted to accommodate the protestant working class into a dominant ideology through the Orange Lodges, in County Durham the coal owners attempted to construct an ideology of supposed mutual interest. Benwell Community Project (1978, pp. 37-48) describe the coal owners as members of a hegemonic class, exerting ideological control through the provision of institutions such as churches, schools, working men's institutes and libraries. However it was not as easy for the Durham bourgeoisie to establish this control as for their unionist counter-parts. The Orange ideology reflected a real material interest because of the benefits of the union for the major industries of north-east Ireland. In County Durham the conflicting interests of the miners and their employers were much more difficult to mask by the "liberal" ideology of community and a harmony of interests between labour and capital. As a result, from the mid-1880s industrial conflict led growing numbers of miners to desert the Liberal Party and support the ascending labour movement and its Labour Party (Carney and Hudson, 1978).

This struggle in County Durham was expressed culturally by the miners building their own autonomous institutions. As Williamson (1982, p. 230) writes of the pit community of Throckley:

"The men who came to Throckley built a life for themselves, as far as they could, free from the constraints of the company and its rules and the vicissitudes of winning coal. The community which developed had 'that necessary habit of mutuality' which many writers have detected as central to working-class communities (Jackson, 1968, p. 166). But its structures were not simply defensive or as isolated as this image suggests; the union lodge, the Labour Party, the co-operate store had an offensive rationale, too, displaying at different points in time changing images of a better society, adjusting strategies for achieving it according to the opportunities they were presented with."

By the early 1900s it was clear that strikes over wages would become an increasingly serious threat to the coal combines. Conflict on a large scale was postponed by the onset of war in 1914 and the reforms introduced immediately after the war. Swenarton (1981) shows how Lloyd George's "homes fit for heroes" council housebuilding programme was designed to defuse class conflict at this time. Until 1921 the coal combines enjoyed booming profits, but with the sudden end of boom conditions they reacted by again forcing down wages and increasing working hours. A series of bitter struggles ensued, culminating in the lock-out and general strike of 1926, when the Durham miners struck for several months after they had been abandoned by the TUC.

The defeat of 1926 was a crucial factor in shaping subsequent political developments, especially in bringing to power moderate labour leaders willing to co-operate with capital within corporatist arrangements. Hall (1984, p. 43) traces the history of this period, showing how 1926 was the culmination of a ruling class strategy to defeat working class radicalism:

"The focal point of the strategy was to split 'moderates' from 'extremists'. The syndicalist, rank-and-file insurgency of the

Triple Alliance had to be separated from 'moderate and responsible trade unionism'. The trump card was the recognition that, in this enterprise, the TUC and the Labour Party were actually the state's strongest allies ... The expansion of the formalized machinery of industrial bargaining, conciliation and negotiation through the state was one key element. Here, in faint outline, we can detect the origin of that corporatist triangle - the incorporation of the organised representatives of capital (the employers' organisations), labour (the TUC) with the state - which later became the centrepiece of the interventionist state strategy in the 1960s and 1970s."

Modernisation was carried out from the top. The defeat of the radical leaders of the 1926 strike, the incorporation of the Labour Party into the machinery of the state and the growth of careerist Labour politicians have all been linked to a distancing of the Party from a base in working class civil society (Alsop, G., 1979; Burnip, 1979; Byrne, undated). It has been suggested that subsequent post-war developments almost certainly reinforced this trend in County Durham, including the movement away from the coalfield of many of the most active union members with the closures of the 1960s, the "embourgeoisement" of the pit villages as the miners bought their houses, the rise of a new group of planning professionals, not linked to any political movement, whose technocracy stifled working class self-activity, the managerial changes in local government which tended to depoliticise the local state, turning councillors into administrators, and the management of many local functions by quasi-governmental agencies (3).

Norman McCord has dubbed the politicians who came to power in the North East after the second world war as "the Labour lieutenants of capitalism" (4). While the old regional bourgeoisie retreated into



exercising their influence over the state through bodies such as the Northern Industrial Group and the North East Development Council (Benwell Community Project, 1978, pp. 65-67), considerable power was wielded in the region by a few right-wing Labour leaders in key union and political positions up to the 1970s (Bulmer, 1978, pp. 95-142). Milne (1976) gives an account of the corruption that existed at the top of the region's Labour Party in the 1960s, and its toleration by the national leadership. This group of "boss men" was wedded to modernisation, and was in close partnership with private capital. They sometimes profited well from the arrangement, as epitomised by the notorious T. Dan Smith (5). Urban renewal and high-rise building were particularly lucrative.

The class struggles of the inter-war period in the North East took place in a context of crisis in the major basic industries - the export-oriented heavy engineering, shipbuilding and textile industries and coal mining, while the new mass consumption-based industries in the South and Midlands of England expanded employment and output (Benwell Community Project, 1978, pp. 49-62). Massey (1984) shows how the changing spatial division of labour after the First World War meant that unemployment soared in regions which specialised in the small group of industries which had been the basis of the British Empire, and its international dominance, but which went into serious decline as the position of UK manufacturing in the world economy deteriorated after the war. She writes of the effects of this structural decline:

\*The indices on which this kind of regional inequality was registered (in other words, the kind of regional problem which was

produced) were the ones which became the classic measures of 'the regional problem' in Britain. The most important of these measures was unemployment, with the level of out-migration, per capita earnings, and the level of manufacturing employment playing subsidiary roles." (p. 130)

The overall pattern of this regional inequality in unemployment in the inter-war years is shown in Table 2.1.

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Table 2.1: UK REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS

	Percentages of insured employees			
	1929	1932	1936	peak month
London	5.6	13.5	7.2	15.0 (Jan '32)
South-Eastern	5.6	14.3	7.3	16.5 (Jan '32)
South-Western	8.1	17.1	9.4	19.3 (Jan '33)
Midlands	9.3	20.1	9.2	22.3 (July '31)
North-Eastern	13.7	28.5	16.8	31.0 (Aug '32)
North-Western	13.3	25.8	13.1	31.3 (Sept '31)
Scotland	12.1	27.7	18.7	29.6 (Jan '33)
Wales	19.3	36.5	29.4	39.9 (Aug '32)
Northern Ireland	14.8	27.2	22.7	33.4 (Dec '30)
United Kingdom	10.4	22.1	13.2	23.1 (Jan '31)

Source: Townsend, 1983, p. 144.

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Large numbers of jobs were lost from coal mining in County Durham in the 1930s, causing very high levels of unemployment. Bulmer (1978, p. 152) describes as follows how the county experienced perhaps the worst effects in any part of the country of the crisis in the inter-war years:

"Several commentators have emphasised that this was a period of economic growth nationally, and even during the Depression one of increasing prosperity and better housing and health in the South and Midlands. This was paralleled by a quite different picture in the depressed areas, which were 'separate enclaves' of unemployment,

material deprivation and ill-health in an increasingly prosperous country. No occupation exemplifies these conditions in Wales, Scotland and the north of England better than the Durham miners. Measured in terms of unemployment rates, the incidence of death and disease, housing, or conditions of income maintenance, County Durham was a depressed, deprived and distressed area between the wars."

Bulmer (1978, pp. 150-152) writes that the decline of mining employment was due to the world depression, the collapse of the coal export trade and stagnating domestic consumption. However Massey (1984, p. 129) and Benwell Community Project (1978, p. 55) argue that a crucial factor was owners moving their capital into other more profitable sectors and other geographical areas, leaving the mines starved of investment. This view is supported by the fact that in 1947, when the mines were nationalized, only 2.4 per cent of output was mechanised (Benwell Community Project, 1978, p. 55). Just as crucially, the shift of capital away from locales of class conflict to the new industries of the South-East and Midlands of England had a significant effect on the trade union movement in Durham and other old industrial areas. As Massey (1984, pp. 129-130), quoting Cooke's (1981) key observation, states:

"The demise of the basic industries was accepted as a "second industrial revolution" particularly by Citrine (The General Secretary) and Bevin (TGWU General Secretary)' (Cooke, 1981, p. 25). Such union leaders, as representatives of the new industries and in the context of their co-operation with the State, thereby eased the way for the establishment of the newly-emerging spatial division of labour. 'The interests of the right-wing general unions (TGWU and NUGMW) in the semi-skilled industries, and their subsequent involvement in government, most obviously in the shape of Bevin, reflected the regional as well as the sectoral shift that had taken place in the power-relations of industrial Britain' (Cooke, pp. 26-7).".

These processes were not confined to areas outside the depressed regions. Post-war modernisation saw investment coming back into the depressed regions in the form of new branch plants employing labour organized spatially into "growth centres" and economically into the general unions. In County Durham this gave the right-wing leadership of the TGWU considerable power in the local state through its influence in the Labour Party.

Northern Ireland also experienced a severe regional problem between the wars. The economy was dominated by agriculture, linen and shipbuilding, all of which were shedding labour on a large scale. Class conflict was accompanied by sectarian clashes, and united working class action was very rare with the perhaps over-rated exception of the outdoor relief riots in 1932 (Devlin, 1981). However, community structures in civil society were very strong, and were reinforced by territorial politics (Wiener, 1980). The control of state structures by the Unionist bourgeoisie, including the regional parliament, was used to employ state powers to intervene selectively in the economy to maintain the electoral support of the protestant working class (Morrissey, H., 1984). This was concentrated on bolstering up the Belfast shipyards. Morrissey contrasts this to the little help that the linen industry received from the government, a neglect often criticised by nationalist MPs. But, as she points out, the linen industry needed protection from imports which only Westminster could enact. In addition, it was a largely female employing industry. In this respect, Massey (1984, pp. 130-131) argues that the textile industry in Britain was also not seen as having the economic and political importance of male-dominated industries.

## 2.1 The modernisation process

The economic and political processes of liberal capitalism in County Durham and North Armagh produced "community-based civil societies" which often became locales of popular resistance to the spatial restructuring demanded by modernisation. This restructuring was organised through regional and local planning machinery which incorporated local political leaders. A feature of modernisation strategy, especially in planning, was the organisation of processes within regions (see Lash and Urry, 1987, pp. 93-109). Modernisation in planning and housing policies in County Durham and North Armagh underpinned "organised" capitalism through "regional strategy", especially in providing and servicing large labour pools, from the inter-war years to the end of the "post-war boom". In fact, modernisation in general was closely tied up with a perceived need for "planning". In industry Fordism exemplified the modernist approach, and large-scale or centralised planning by corporations and by the state was the strategy's hallmark (Gough, 1986, p. 62; Harvey, 1987).

By the early 1930s planning had become something of a universal panacea for the British Labour Party, but in a top-down form. Samuel (1986, p. 29) identifies this as a type of "statism", involving a distancing of working people from decision-making, which became the preserve of "experts". Added to this was the influence of a number of technocratic wartime administrators, of which Beveridge is perhaps the best known but who also included figures such as Barlow, whose 26 volume report published in 1940, in essence reviewing the failures of the 1934 Special

Areas Act, recommended that industry and labour should be dispersed to "growth centres" in the peripheral regions through positive state action (Cullingworth, 1985, pp. 8-12). These technocrats saw the Keynesian Welfare State as the peaceful path to reforming capitalism. Nationalisation of basic industries, macroeconomic management, economic corporatism and the welfare state were the main instruments by which this would be achieved (Thompson, 1984). The improved bargaining position of labour after the war saw the incorporation of its leaders into state structures which dominated the working class, but won consent through political commitments to economic growth and rising living standards. However, although state planning may have been reformist in intent, it was restructuring in practice, as exemplified by the nationalisation of the coal mines, at no cost to capital, and the state management of the industry's subsequent and dramatic rationalisation (Benwell Community Project, 1978, pp. 72-73).

While in industrial policy the 1945 Labour Government attempted to meet the problems of peripheral regions in Britain such as the North East through the Distribution of Industry Act 1945, which established the Development Areas, in Northern Ireland Stormont passed a series of pieces of industrial development legislation between 1945 and 1954 which were in fact wider in scope and more attractive to capital than the British legislation (Birrell and Murie, 1980, p. 203; Wiener, 1980, p. 32). In addition, against a background of the popularity of the welfare state in Britain, welfare measures were introduced into Northern Ireland by the Unionist Government, despite the bourgeoisie's traditional hostility to such provision. Disaffection among the protestant

industrial working class with Unionist Party policies, expressed in a large protestant vote for the Northern Ireland Labour Party in the 1945 Stormont elections, was a very significant factor in this move (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979, pp. 102-128; Hall, 1986, pp. 210-216; Walker, 1985, pp. 147-177). However, none of the British Labour Government's post-war comprehensive planning legislation, principally the New Towns Act 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1946, was followed by Stormont. The degree of central control required to implement such legislation ruled it out until the resistance of the local councils to any further interference with their powers and territorial configuration could be overcome (Allen, 1981).

Despite this, Unionist Governments' post-war measures were clearly aimed at a degree of social and economic modernisation. In housing this took a typically corporatist form, with the wartime Planning Advisory Board and Commission drawing up plans for post-war reconstruction and an ambitious post-war housing programme led by a new corporatist agency, the Northern Ireland Housing Trust. The economic component of modernisation, though, was concerned with indigenous, family-owned businesses - shipbuilding especially, but also textiles and related engineering. By the end of the 1950s, however, these industries were very vulnerable to recession. In fact the linen industry shed a large number of workers during this decade, due both to take-overs and decline (Hall, 1986, pp. 217-218). In the textile sector, employment fell from 72,800 in 1950 to 54,100 in 1959, a drop of 25.7 per cent, compared with 16.6 per cent in Britain (Hall, 1986, p. 195).

The period 1958-1964 saw major mobilisations against unemployment and redundancies by skilled protestant workers in Belfast, with defections to Labourist politics, and increasing pressure was on the Unionist Party to take action about the economic situation (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979). The failure to stem politically costly rising unemployment in Northern Ireland's traditional industries, without inordinate state financial support, forced the Unionist statelet to consider a strategy of attracting into the region external capital rather than supporting uncompetitive local firms. Captain Terence O'Neill's succession to the leadership of the Unionist Party in 1963 marked a clear break with past policies and inaugurated an expansion of the modernisation strategy, particularly in the field of regional planning. Under O'Neill a Ministry of Development was established in 1965, and the strategic Matthew Plan for physically re-shaping the Belfast sub-region and creating a major new town was adopted (Matthew, 1965). This was an era of modernisation which paralleled Britain's second post-war wave of new towns in the 1960s. It was overseen by a "modern" Unionist leadership: under O'Neill the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was officially recognised for the first time, and the historic act of inviting the Irish Republic's Prime Minister to Stormont for talks about economic co-operation took place. But neither this Unionist modernism, nor the economic growth which occurred strongly between 1958 and 1968, were to last. O'Neill's "fraternisation" with catholics and the Irish Republic fuelled the rise of Paisleyism, while after 1970 manufacturing industry went into a decline, dominated by the collapse of large-scale synthetic fibre plants in Northern Ireland. This reached crisis proportions after



1979, completely undermining modernist planning and housing strategy based on this form of accumulation (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1979).

The Matthew Plan recommended containing the expansion of the Belfast Urban Area, while re-locating labour and investment to a number of growth centres within the Belfast sub-region (the predominantly protestant area within about a thirty mile radius of the city containing two-thirds of Northern Ireland's population and four-fifths of its industrial workers). The Plan followed the Hall Report of 1962, which urged the modernisation of the region's industrial base, and was complemented by the Wilson Report. The latter report spelt out the large-scale population movements necessary to attract capital into the region:

"It would be hard to reconcile a national policy for faster growth with one of taking manufacturing industry to every town and village where there was some unemployment. The efficiency of industry in the broad sense of the term depends partly upon its location and some locations may be particularly unsuitable. The successful development of manufacturing industry is also facilitated by concentration of the population in urban centres of a reasonable size" (quoted in Hall, 1987, p. 251).

The single most important new development recommended by the Matthew Plan was the building of a new town on greenfield sites between the existing declining linen towns of Lurgan and Portadown in North Armagh, later named Craigavon. This was to be accompanied by tight controls on the expansion of Belfast and on development in the countryside. The idea was that the new town would be a major regional focus of industrial growth, taking in population from nearby rural areas, southern and

western areas of Northern Ireland, and Belfast - where people would be displaced by redevelopment to make way for the roads that would link the city with an inter-urban motorway network (Wiener, 1980, p. 34).

In North East England modernisation took a very similar course. The transformation of the built environment was fuelled by the abolition of development charges and building licences in the 1950s. In the post-war expansionary conditions, many transnationals were attracted by the idea of locating a branch plant in the Durham coalfield given the availability of state aid and large labour reserves, especially women (Austrin and Beynon, 1979). However, as in Northern Ireland, state intervention was necessary to organise the population into labour pools in locations attractive to capital. Austrin and Beynon found that the "supply of labour" was mentioned repeatedly by managers explaining their firms' decisions to locate in the area. This need for an adequate pool of labour arose from the nature of much capitalist production in this period, which involved "... standardised products, mass production, the predominant use of semi-skilled labour in repetitive tasks, and distribution to large, undifferentiated markets" (Gough, 1986, p. 60). This shaped spatial policy during the post-war modernisation era.

The policy was set out by the Pepler-MacFarlane Report of 1949 on economic development in the North East. The Report

"... classified areas in terms of economic growth potential and suggested public sector resource allocations by the State, for example in housing, to selected locations (those with 'economic growth' potential) in order to achieve this." (Carney and Hudson, 1976, p. 12)

After the war, Durham County Council planned within this strategy and accepted that the county's settlement pattern, largely an outcome of late nineteenth century industrialisation, was anachronistic given the needs of modern industry and what it saw as the inevitable decline of certain old industrial areas. On this basis, the Durham County Development Plan, drawn up under the Labour Government's 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, set out a policy for adjusting the whole fabric of the settlement pattern (Durham County Council, 1951). As was noted above, such modernism, enabled by a rapid and considerable expansion of local state expenditure, turning local government into "big business", appealed to the region's Labour leaders.

The planners assessed the "viability" of each settlement in County Durham. Settlements were placed into one of four categories. Category "A" were the growth centres into which considerable investment was envisaged. Category "B" were stable settlements where investment would be kept at a level sufficient to cater for their populations at that time. Category "C" were settlements where some decline was expected and investment would be reduced accordingly. Category "D" were settlements where economic and physical decline and considerable population loss were expected. It was recommended that no major investments should be made in Category "D" settlements and that substandard housing should be replaced elsewhere.

The consequence of this strategy was that many of the old pit settlements in the west of the county would be depopulated, settlements in the east of the county would be maintained as the pits there

expanded, and the centre of south of the county would provide growth sites for new housing estates and new industry.

Spatial restructuring was adopted some twenty years earlier in County Durham than in Northern Ireland because of the support of central government and the county council for what Merrett (1979, p. 236), referring to the policies of the Attlee Government, sums up as "the goal of an effectively and rationally managed capitalism". In both sub-regions it was a response to the needs of capital. However, as Jessop (1982, p. 235) observes, state intervention generally occurs in response to the political repercussions of economic crisis and not to the economic crisis as such. The political context of the later adoption of modernisation and regional planning in Northern Ireland has been discussed above in terms of the unionist class alliance. In North East England modernisation has been analysed in terms of the effects on the labour movement leadership of the defeats of the inter-war years, and the leadership's incorporation from a position of strength into the state machinery after the Second World War. Corporatist forms of administration in Britain were still sensitive to bottom-up pressures, though, especially spatial coalitions often cutting across class. Spatial policy provided a means of responding (see Pickvance, 1985).

In North East England the Hailsham Plan was a similar strategy to the Matthew Plan, responding to local political pressure for state intervention due to growing economic problems (Hudson, 1983). A sharp jump in unemployment in the region in December 1962, which continued into 1963, increased demands from the Labour Party, trade unions and

business organisations in the region for central government action. This, together with the Conservative Government's concern about the electoral consequences of declining popularity, led to the appointment of Hailsham as Minister for the North East and the adoption of the Hailsham Plan. This Plan also entailed spatially concentrating investment - in a series of growth centres in a corridor between the rivers Tyne and Tees.

These growth centres dominated modernisation strategy in County Durham and North Armagh until the late 1970s. The strategy was carried over into the new structure plan drawn up by Durham County Council following the revision to the British planning system made by the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act (see chapter 3). It was described by the County Planning Officer as follows:

"The aim of the policy is to concentrate development into selected centres in order to achieve the maximum benefit from the limited amount of resources, both public and private, available in the County. This, in turn, will help to create better settlements with a wider range of social and other facilities and, in this way, bring about better living conditions and stem the loss of population by outward migration from the County. It will also help to make the County more attractive for industrial development." (6)

At broadly the same time, in Northern Ireland the Development Programme 1970-75 (Matthew, Wilson and Parkinson, 1970) continued and elaborated the Matthew Plan. This document stated that:

"The planned expansion of the growth centres and the achievement of their desired momentum in terms of industrial growth depends to a large extent on movement into them of population from Belfast and from rural areas. These centres will be among the most valuable locations which Northern Ireland will be offering to potential

industrialists in the years up to 1975. It is of crucial importance therefore that they are able to offer new industry the prospect of readily available manpower living adjacent to the sites where new firms will be situated. The provision of this manpower for new industry will involve movement both from the Belfast Urban Area and from the outlying areas." (p. 141)

### 2.3 Modernisation and housing

Mass state housing built for rent played a major role in modernisation and its spatial restructuring element. In Britain the expansion of physical development expenditures put a few large construction companies in a position from which they could largely determine the form of housing during this period, especially in the big volume projects for large urban areas, radically altering the appearance of council housing (Dunleavy, 1981). In Northern Ireland the introduction of mass state housing co-incided with the beginning of post-war modernisation, radically altering the whole nature of housing provision in the province. This was uniform mass construction, but high-rise was not extensively employed. In County Durham the relationship between modernisation and state housing is less direct because of the role of council housing in class struggles about housing conditions dating back to the late nineteenth century, but modern mass state housing was quite distinctive in terms of the large uniform housing areas and "modern environments" it created in the "growth centres".

Local councils in Northern Ireland provided only 15 per cent of a low total output of new housing between 1919 and 1939, compared with 25 per cent in England and Wales during the same period and a housing boom

(Birrell and Murie, 1980, pp. 209-220). This difference cannot be explained by differences in central government subsidies. There is evidence that it was a result of the dominance of the petit bourgeoisie on small local councils and the absence, for reasons considered above, of a strong labour movement mobilising around housing issues (see also McCashin and Morrissey, 1985). Birrell, Hillyard, Murie and Roche (1971, pp. 49-80) state that inter-war housing policy in Northern Ireland largely halted with Stormont's 1923 Housing Act, which imitated the 1923 Chamberlain Act in England and Wales. Except for one small scheme in Belfast, there was no slum redevelopment in Northern Ireland between the wars. A reliance by the Unionist statelet on the housing market, in which many Unionist politicians had vested interests, meant for the mass of the population a deteriorating housing situation.

The main exception to this laissez-faire approach was housing for agricultural workers. The social reproduction of rural labour demanded state intervention and led to Northern Ireland's earliest state housing under the Rural Labourers Cottages Acts of the turn of the century. These Acts continued to be used up until the Second World War, and 3,477 cottages were built under them (McCashin and Morrissey, 1985, p. 294). They comprised much of the housing stock of the Montaigns in North Armagh, where their renovation and replacement in situ became an important local issue in the 1970s (see chapter 7).

In great contrast, County Durham stands out as an area of consistently high rates of council housebuilding dating back to 1919. Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, pp. 147-157) show that Durham was in the

top group of English counties with regard to council house completions per thousand population for the whole period from 1919 to 1982. Ryder (1984) shows that the county's chronically bad housing conditions led to an exceptionally high level of building by local councils during the inter-war period. Although the local government electoral successes of the Labour Party were important in determining this commitment to council housing, Daunton (1980) shows that the coal companies were not antipathetic to such provision as a means of reproduction. Their practice of providing rent-free houses for the miners and their families was unprofitable and for the mine owners trade union and Labour Party pressure for higher housing standards was better met through the ratepayer and taxpayer than by building houses to improved standards themselves, or increasing the weekly rent allowance paid to some miners. However, the local councils in County Durham used the ability to build council houses as an important part of a hegemonic struggle with the mine owners. Mike Murphy has argued that the early council houses were vastly superior in quality to the coal company houses, and were a visible symbol of socialism's achievements over capitalism (?).

The quality of council housing became a major issue between local councils in County Durham and central government. Rate-borne expenditure grew throughout the inter-war period as mostly Labour-controlled councils in the coalfield areas attempted to transform qualitatively housing conditions for the working class through a tenure that for most of the inter-war period central governments wanted to restrict to a basic public health standard (Byrne, Harrison, Keithley and McCarthy, 1986, pp. 21-28). Ryder (1984, p. 50) comments:



"The achievement of local authorities in many districts of County Durham in the inter-war period appears very much, therefore, to have been in making up a substantial part of the deficiency both in the quality of working-class housing, for which private enterprise had previously been responsible, and in the quantity, which even between the wars the private sector was unable to correct."

The general improvement in housing conditions in County Durham during the inter-war years contrasted dramatically with Northern Ireland's deteriorating housing situation. Thus, while post-war modernisation saw the state's first commitment to major improvements in the quality of working class housing in Northern Ireland, in County Durham local councils had been pursuing this objective for many years, and modernisation was much more a shift in the purpose of state housing which was reflected in design and planning (essentially from improving housing quality by rejecting capitalism in housing provision to serving capitalism by planning housing to meet the reproductive needs of capital).

Local councils in County Durham, though, were not exclusively committed to council housing. The 1923 Chamberlain Act enabled councils to supplement Exchequer subsidies to builders constructing private houses with a rate fund contribution. At least ten councils in County Durham took this up (Ryder, 1984). Labour-controlled Easington was particularly enthusiastic, seeing it as a way of providing houses that would otherwise have to be built by the council at heavy cost to the ratepayers, and as a result private building was much higher in Easington than most other coalfield districts. As chapter 4 shows, Easington's favourable attitude to construction for owner-occupation by

private builders continued into the 1980s, and its councillors did not see this as contradicting a "socialist" housing policy because in their view houses were getting built that would not be otherwise. Easington also made considerable use of direct labour, with 47 per cent of new council houses built by this means between 1919 and 1927. While direct building labour was used by some councils in the county to reduce local unemployment and increase benefit entitlements, a more important reason was to reduce costs by cutting out the private builders' profits (Ryder, 1984).

There was differentiation in the quality of state housing (see chapter 1's criticism of "consumption cleavages"). Ryder (1984) concludes that although the less well-paid working class probably had a better chance of getting a council house in County Durham than in many other areas, better quality houses were generally let to better-paid "respectable" tenants. In part this was because rents reflected the quality of housing. The high-quality Addison houses were particularly expensive despite councils' attempts to keep rents down, while the basic 1930s slum replacement housing was much cheaper.

National housing policy in the 1930s did not show the same commitment to modifying the link between income and housing quality as the Addison and Wheatley periods. It also attempted to relate housing provision to the uneven development of capital, a strategy typical of the modernisation era. Labour councils in County Durham were generally hostile to both these developments. Largely because they could not be relied upon to plan for the reproductive needs of capital, the Government set up the

North-Eastern Housing Association in 1936. This was a central government body established through the Commissioner for the Special Areas to build and manage rented houses in the region. While reflecting Government concern about the political consequences of not relieving widespread mass unemployment when local council housebuilding had been cut back to slum redevelopment, it was also a means of ensuring that housing was not built "indiscriminately", i.e. in response to local political pressures rather than the needs of capital. Along with the new bodies to administer unemployment assistance and regional policy, it was a form of corporatist intervention which foreshadowed the post-war period. It received a mixed reception from the local councils, and sixteen refused to co-operate with it at all (Ryder, 1984). Councils in County Durham built for general needs in locations they considered most appropriate. However, the establishment of the North-Eastern Housing Association reflected growing central government interest in the strategic question of where new housing should be built. It was concerned that housing investment should not be made in areas where private capital was not investing. This was further reinforced with the creation of the South West Durham Improvement Association, also established through the Commissioner for the Special Areas, which had the objective of evacuating and demolishing housing in the declining pit villages in the south-west of the county and returning the land to agriculture. In addition, the Ministry of Health discouraged council building in the more depressed districts of the county in the 1930s.

Although council housing was one major programme excluded from the extension of corporatist administration after the Second World War,

which embraced the management of the nationalised industries, public utilities, industrial development, new town development, hospitals and social security, it was a very important component of modernisation. While council housing was administered by elected local councils, Dunleavy (1981) shows how the management of councils as strong and closed authorities by a small group of council leaders incorporated within the structures of expanding local expenditures dominated by the needs of capital, excluded public housing "clients" from decisions about their "housing needs". Indeed, Ball (1985) questions the socialist nature of council housing and argues that its importance to Labour Governments tended to be in the provision of social infrastructure for capitalist accumulation, counter-cyclical Keynesian demand management and the creation of political support in new council estates.

These were, in fact, precisely the reasons why Unionist governments in Northern Ireland - which were extremely anti-socialist - built large numbers of public sector dwellings for the first time after the Second World War, giving credence to Ball's argument. The main instrument of this intervention was a body similar to the North-Eastern Housing Association but in fact modelled on the Scottish Special Housing Association - the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, established in 1945. This was created to boost public sector housing in areas where capital was investing, but also produced houses of relatively high quality to meet housing needs. McCashin and Morrissey (1985, p. 295) summarise the background to this intervention in terms that will now be familiar to the reader:

"The war saw a period of increasing tension within the alliance of forces which constituted Unionism. Labour politics seemed to be gaining some ground particularly with the industrial working class in Belfast and there was concern in government circles that the issue of post-war reconstruction be tied to the reconstruction of its own dominant electoral base. Early promises in that respect made by Andrews (the Unionist Prime Minister) were not sanctioned by the British Treasury, but its later conversion to Keynesianism and the acceptance of the principle of parity for Northern Ireland, achieved if necessary by subsidy, set the conditions for a more vigorous public sector housing policy ... (U)nder new legislation passed in 1945, the rate of house building increased from 2,500 dwellings per year in the inter-war period to 7,500 in the period 1946-71."

Stormont's 1956 Housing Act required the local councils to draw up redevelopment schemes. Their reports documented an extensive problem of unfitness and in Belfast the conjuncture of this with the land demands of the restructuring strategy set in motion by the Matthew Plan led to a massive redevelopment programme being launched in 1962 (Wiener, 1980; Parson, 1981). The displaced population would provide labour for the modern growth centres in the Belfast sub-region. However, the continuing refusal to tackle the much worse housing situation of catholics compared with protestants, especially outside the Belfast sub-region, was a major, perhaps the major, factor in the rise of the civil rights movement in the late 1960s. The resulting pressure on Stormont from the British Government to defuse the situation led to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in 1971. This removed housing from local electoral politics. The Housing Executive took over the housing functions of the local councils, the new town development commissions and the Northern Ireland Housing Trust. The aim was to establish a comprehensive regional housing agency, directly responsible to central government, whose specially selected and

"balanced" Board of Directors would carry out its housing functions impartially and would modernise on a large scale to raise standards across the board (Birrell and Murie, 1980, pp. 214-220).

Except for the five months of the ill-fated Northern Ireland Assembly in 1974, after Direct Rule was imposed in 1972 housing policy in Northern Ireland broadly followed British policy. But the establishment of the Housing Executive was meant to depoliticise housing issues in Northern Ireland. For example, commenting on the composition of the Executive's Board its chairperson from 1979 to 1984 stated:

"All the major strands of opinion in the community are represented; but Board members I am glad to say leave their party politics and their religious prejudices, if any, on the hat-rack outside the boardroom door." (Brett, 1983; p. 1)

The depoliticisation of housing in Northern Ireland was presented by the chairperson as a model for housing authorities throughout the UK:

"Northern Ireland is benefitting, to the tune of perhaps £100 million a year, from the fact that its housing administration is seen as being free from party politics, which sometimes bedevil housing administration elsewhere." (8)

The Housing Executive aimed to separate housing issues from the conflict about the state in Northern Ireland by displacing democratic control (however imperfect) with corporatist control (reformist and modernising from above). However it was not an exceptional type of state body, and resembled the large agencies of British post-war corporatism as described by Dunleavy (1985, p. 15):

"Public corporations were created which faithfully mimic the objectives and managerial style of any other large corporation. Quasi-governmental agencies, effectively accountable to no elected representatives, have multiplied and been given functions too 'sensitive' to form the focus of direct political mobilisation."

This absence of accountability meant that the Housing Executive had a problem of legitimating its policies and actions, particularly when these involved social costs, such as with redevelopment. It attempted to deal with this by emphasising its "fair" and "neutral" role in providing housing services. However it has also engaged in strategies of incorporation. Parson (1981) gives an account of how the introduction into Northern Ireland of Housing Action Areas and housing association involvement in rehabilitation in 1976 served to incorporate working class protest about the restructuring of the urban environment of Belfast. Chapter 8 of the present thesis discusses how tenant protest in Craigavon was incorporated into structures determined by the Housing Executive.

Redevelopment also came to dominate the housing activities of local councils in County Durham after the war, but within a strategic framework imposed from above by the County Council to "modernise" the area and attract capital. Council house completions outnumbered private completions by two to one between 1959 and 1969 (Wilson, 1970). Combined with the large-scale clearance of pre-1919 housing, this activity dramatically altered the age-structure of the county's housing stock so that by 1965 its proportion of post-war housing was above the national average. Whilst in 1951 over half of the county's households had no bath, by 1961 this had fallen to a quarter. The south-west part

of the county had the worst conditions: in 1961 36 per cent of households were still without a bath and 40 per cent of houses lacked hot and cold water and exclusive use of a WC and sink, compared with less than 30 per cent in the rest of the county. These problems were reflected in the energetic clearance of houses in the old mining settlements, but they were replaced in new council estates in the growth centres often several miles away. These policies continued into the 1970s and met considerable popular resistance (chapter 3). In East Durham the declining pit villages received similar treatment as new building was concentrated in the new town of Peterlee (chapter 4).

Whilst the strategic framework for spatial restructuring contained in county development plans was aimed at depopulating supposedly "unviable" locations, some of the abandoned pit villages, especially in the north of the county, came to provide pools of very cheap private housing for commuters to the nearby conurbations (Thorpe, 1970, p. 393). This fuelled claims that private enterprise was being stifled. But it was the character of individual localities which tended to determine their potential for new private development so that, for example, pleasant agricultural villages were converted into "middle class" commuter suburbs, while many old industrial villages were in fact left to decline. Some villages with accessible building land attracted relatively large speculative developers. One such developer accounted for 33 per cent of all private houses completed in the coalfield area of County Durham between 1946 and 1966 (Thorpe, 1970, p. 393).



By no means all local council action was directed at redevelopment. Between 1971 and 1974 a high level of private sector improvement activity followed from the enhanced grant rates for improvement work completed before 1974 introduced into Development Areas and Special Development Areas by the Conservative Government.

The new emphasis on rehabilitation was very significant. It resulted from a switch nationally out of subsidising new building by local councils into improvement of private housing. A series of taxation benefits implemented during the 1960s were already stimulating the consumption of private housing (Merrett with Gray, 1982, pp. 34-35). The switch to preserving the existing stock began with the 1969 Housing Act when, with the economic crisis of the late 1960s, the Labour Government decided that it had to retreat from high levels of council housebuilding (Balchin, 1985, pp. 62-90; Merrett, 1979, pp. 113-119). It marked the beginning of the end of modernisation as local authority expenditure growth slowed down. Housing cost yardsticks had been introduced in 1967, followed in 1972 by the first attempt in the history of council housing to make the stock an "investment" yielding a rate of return to its landlords (Merrett, 1979, pp. 254-268). The era of modernisation was beginning to come to an end as the post-war boom turned into economic crisis, but extensive areas of poor housing remained which the new rehabilitation approach was meant to tackle. Spatial restructuring had created major additional labour reserves in the peripheral regions which, as unemployment rose, became depressed "problem estates".

Redevelopment and displacement during the modernisation era had become increasingly unpopular. The problems of high rise and growing opposition to "mass housing" environments made it politically extremely difficult to advocate state housing in the 1970s. This was recognised by Richard Crossman, when Secretary of State for Social Services, who took the view that "improvement was safer than building new houses because it created fewer social problems" (quoted in Balchin, 1985, p. 67). In the same vein, a few years later when he was Secretary of State for the Environment he stated with regard to the 1974 Housing Act that:

"I have for long been a passionate opponent of indiscriminate clearance, which I believe has gone too far ... in many areas. I believe that indiscriminate clearance can be appallingly destructive of existing communities and frequently a very expensive solution." (quoted in Balchin, 1985, p. 75)

In County Durham throughout the period 1961-1974 new build by local councils and the new town development corporations exceeded the output of new private housing. But from 1972 the output of new council houses in the county began to decline as central government used financial pressures to encourage a transfer of local spending into improvement. Nevertheless, substantial demolition of older housing continued. This was despite the fact that by the mid-1960s most of the worst housing of earlier industrial urbanisation, which was clearly sanitarily inadequate, had been cleared. Local councils, following the corporatist reorganisation of 1974, were still in a strong position in the national polity (see Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1983). Their health inspectors started to turn their attention to "near slums", and clearance of this type of housing was often resisted by residents (Dennis, 1970; 1972). Popular

disenchantment with the actions of many local councils grew, reflected in the comments of one of their most prominent critics:

"Is it far-fetched to equate Orwell's men of power with the shapers of the urban environment ...? Consider the experience of Newcastle. The celebrated Labour leader of its council was T. Dan Smith, who determined to make that city 'the new Brasilia'. In his memoirs he describes how 'I hired a Rapide aircraft to make flying visits to see candidates for our new appointment of a Planning Officer ... Local government had moved from a parish pump era into the big business league'. The man he found was Wilfred Burns, who declared that 'the dwellers of a slum are almost a separate race of people, with different values, aspirations and ways of living ... Most people who live in slums have no views on their environment at all.' Furthermore, 'when we are dealing with people who have no initiative or civic pride, the task, surely is to break up such groupings even though the people seem to be satisfied with their miserable environment and seem to enjoy an extrovert social life in their own locality.'" (Ward, 1984a, p. 6)

The result of modernisation in housing and planning was often not utopia but "mass housing" which proved to be very unpopular, especially as its occupants were increasingly marginalised by the deepening recession in peripheral areas in the 1970s (Dunleavy, 1981, pp. 1-33). The abandonment of modernism in national housing policy, and the mass state housing forms that had often been built so badly, occurred as the era of large-scale spatial restructuring strategies which had made it possible came to a close (see next section). Housing policy could be re-directed to supporting the housing market and satisfying "consumer demand", rather than being concerned with the direct provision of state housing within a strategic spatial framework based on the labour demands of expanding Fordist-type accumulation. Housing policy would concentrate on upgrading existing housing, re Commodifying the stock, intensifying management on "problem estates" and developing alternatives to housing

provision by large municipal landlords. The shift nationally to rehabilitation by both of Britain's main political parties at the end of the 1960s reflected a consensus that owner-occupation was "normal" and preferable to renting, and should be expanded (Merrett with Gray, 1982, pp. 35-43). In the less affluent regions this expansion was also stimulated in other ways; for example, the option mortgage scheme, which by 1972 accounted for a fifth of all mortgages in County Durham (9). Dunleavy (1981, p. 354) concludes of this period:

The perceived failure of state intervention in housing represented by high-rise has been used to support virtually all the policy changes of the last decade ... High-rise also played a central role in the extraordinary consensus of the early 1970s on the need for rehabilitation ... the high rise housing boom cast a sizeable blight on the public image of post-war council housing. The policy lent itself to analysis in terms of the inherent inefficiency, bureaucratic indifference, and unresponsiveness of state intervention compared with market provision."

Although high-rise did not figure prominently in the housing output of the local state in either County Durham or North Armagh, low-rise mass housing forms did. Furthermore, the developments which Dunleavy documents had a marked effect on housing policy in these two areas because of the way national policy shifted. Opposition to the "bureaucratisation" of state housing policy and practice and the quality of the product during the modernisation era was an important aspect of the community action described in subsequent chapters. However, this type of state intervention was a result of the processes discussed in the present chapter; processes which were dominated by the relationship of the state to capitalism. The next section considers further evidence for this point by examining how state planning strategy in County Durham

and North Armagh changed in similar ways as the regime of "modern" branch plant accumulation, which never developed on the scale planned for, was transformed by disinvestment and rationalisation.

#### 2.4 Planning in the post-modern era

As discussed in chapter 1, modernising planning and housing policies were largely abandoned as the Keynesian Welfare State itself came under attack from capital and the New Right in the 1970s. There appeared to be popular disenchantment with modernisation, its top-down large-scale restructuring, disruptive redevelopment and displacement, mass housing and failure to deliver economic growth in the regions. Austrin and Beynon (1979) analyse its fate in North East England in terms of the vulnerability of the branch-plant economy, which partly replaced the traditional economic base of the region, to the shifts in international accumulation and the division of labour, which began to have a major effect on the North East in the early 1970s. Gaffikin and Morrissey (1987) describe a similar process of branch-plant withdrawal and a dramatic economic downturn during the 1970s in Northern Ireland. There were also heavy redundancies in both regions caused by the rationalisation of nationalised manufacturing industries (Hudson, 1985; Beynon, Hudson and Sadler, 1986; Hall, 1986, 288-291). However, a key process which undermined modernisation was a "decentralising" of accumulation, making the growth centre strategy in particular inappropriate, and creating pressures for a more relaxed planning regime (see Lash and Urry, 1987, pp. 300-301).



In County Durham the attempt to attract manufacturing capital to replace jobs rapidly being lost in coal mining only had notable success in Durham City. Even there the service sector, and particularly the public sector, was actually the cornerstone of the employment base and this sector was not employing the workers who were losing jobs in the pit villages (Durham Unemployment Forum, 1983). The new manufacturing base elsewhere in the county went into deep recession from the late 1970s after only a short period of accumulation. Townsend (1983, pp. 102-103) has documented the nature of job losses in the Northern Region (the North East and Cumbria) between 1976 and 1982, noting that the region sustained the highest rates of unemployment in Britain throughout this period (not the highest rates in the UK - that was Northern Ireland). These levels of unemployment were caused by branch plant closures and major rationalisations of nationalised industries. The largest closure in County Durham was the Courtaulds factory in Spennymoor in 1979, while the shut down of the Consett steelworks in the north-west of the county in 1980 showed how devastating job-shedding by a nationalised industry could be.

The reformist aspects of modernisation were based on an almost utopian faith in growth in the UK, and the in the peripheral regions in particular, fuelled by the capitalist economy. The false hopes raised by incoming capital in the 1960s and 1970s are exemplified by the short history of the new Courtaulds factory in Spennymoor which offered in its recruitment literature "a good wage and a job for life" only to close after a few years (Ellis and Fahey, 1979). Consett, which Durham County Council designated as a growth centre under its post-war settlement

policy, was crippled by the closure of the town's steelworks, resulting in direct and indirect job losses totalling over 9,500 in a town of 30,000 people. Soon after the steelworks shut down a series of major closures led to Consett losing almost half of its manufacturing industries in just two years (Chester and Tighe, 1985; Garnett, 1985).

The 1970s and early 1980s were also years of major closures in manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Economic Council, 1983). Closures in the Matthew Plan's growth centres included Courtaulds in Carrickfergus, British Enkalon in Antrim, Michelin in Mallusk and Goodyear in Craigavon. Bowers (1985) estimates that over 15,200 direct and indirect jobs were lost in these four closures alone. The artificial fibre plants which comprised most of the inward investments attracted by regional policy in the 1960s had by the early 1980s "virtually disappeared along with large chunks of telecommunications, electronics and rubber production" (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1987, p. 41).

Townsend (1983, p. 194) draws the following conclusions from the failure of post-war regional policy to create economic growth in the "assisted areas" and the new and expanded towns:

1. Manufacturing industries which expanded in the "growth areas" experienced employment decline in the 1976-82 recession as badly as traditional industries had before them (e.g. coal and textiles). The size of plants in some of the industries worst affected, e.g. synthetic textiles, resulted in major local impacts;

2. Large branch plants cannot be regarded as stable investments;
3. The "assisted regions" are more dependent on their own resources than at any other time since the 1930s.

In the case of Northern Ireland, Bull, Harrison and Hart (1982) add that the policy of designating Craigavon and Ballymena as "growth centres" had very little impact on their growth (and subsequent decline). Their analysis led them to suggest that the policy essentially followed existing market trends.

Given the obvious failure of the growth centre strategy as a means of modernising the industrial base of the regions, no central government was likely to continue with it. Two factors shaped the subsequent change in strategy to "early post-modernism" which the disorganising of capitalism demanded. First, the growing dependence of the peripheral regions on public expenditure meant that growth in this expenditure had to be contained. Second, the only available option for the capitalist state in these regions seemed to be a strategy of what Hudson (1985) calls "regional self-help" - an ideology of small business revivalism and indigenous enterprise (Rainnie (1985) argues that this was essentially about searching out areas of low pay and union organisation). In addition these regions, once industrial heartlands and locales of strong trade unionism, were reconstituted through the crisis of the 1970s into spatial reserve armies of labour which could be exploited by post-Fordist transnationals looking for labour and supply flexibility (Holloway, 1987; Sayer, 1986; Byrne and Parson, 1983). Their role as domestically depressed export platforms to Europe was



illustrated most clearly by Nissan's decision to locate a major new car plant in Sunderland to compete for the European market (10).

Rising unemployment and conditions in which only low economic growth was occurring created a problem for the state which may be analysed using O'Connor's (1973, pp. 97-178) concepts of social expenses, social investment and social consumption. Social expenses are the costs of reproducing the "surplus population", including welfare provision and law and order, which in the UK and other advanced capitalist states grew dramatically during the 1960s and 70s (Gough, 1979, pp. 75-101). Social expenses will be most heavy relative to tax yields in the peripheral regions. Social investment is state spending on physical infrastructure, economic administration, training and research; and social consumption is state expenditures on reproducing the working population.

The post-war modernisation strategy in County Durham and North Armagh was characterised by large state outlays on social investment and social consumption. The "early post-modern" period, set in motion by economic crisis during the 1970s and consolidated by the first Thatcher Government, was characterised by a retrenchment in state spending in these areas and the dramatic growth of spending on social expenses. M. Morrissey (1985, p. 131) shows that in contrast to a very large increase in state expenditure on social security and law and order in Northern Ireland between 1973 and 1984, state spending on industrial development declined by 25 per cent, as shown in Table 2.2:

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Table 2.2: CHANGES IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY SUB-PROGRAMME, 1973/74 and 1984/85.

	Change (1975 prices)		Percentage of total	
	£ m	%	1973/74	1984/85
Industry, energy and employment	-50	-25	18.4	10.2
Law and order	+54	+54	9.0	10.3
Social security	+202	+85	21.4	29.3

Source: Morrissey, M., 1985, p. 131).

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The decline in state spending on industrial development resulted from firms failing to set up or expand in the region: sums were set aside for industrial development but were not taken up.

A similar pattern emerges in the North of England (the North East and Cumbria), although it was not possible to obtain directly comparable data. The North of England County Councils Association (1982, pp. 35-39) showed that although public expenditure in the North increased in real terms by 7.9 per cent between 1977/78 and 1981/82, the growth in expenditure on social security accounted for all but 0.6 per cent of this increase. The Association reported that since 1975 the region's share of state expenditure on infrastructure, employment and trade and industry had been less than its share of the total UK population (p. 9). It concludes that since 1977:

"... (E)xpenditure growth has taken place only in those programmes which benefit individually rather than those which contribute to the economic objectives of the Region. If social security and special employment measures are excluded, public expenditure in the North

actually fell between 1977/78 and 1981/82. The Government's future plans indicate a continuation of this pattern which, effectively, finances unemployment by reducing the resources to combat it!" (North of England County Councils Association (1982, p. 7)

Not only was there a decline in "regional policy expenditures" in the UK during the 1970s and early 1980s, but the growth areas of South East England probably received considerably larger social investment and consumption expenditures than the supposedly "assisted areas". Thomas (1983, p. 359) writes that:

"... the regional distribution of public spending is coming under new scrutiny. The regions have been squabbling over aid, narrowly defined, which has fallen by 40 per cent in real terms since 1975-76. But this is a tiny proportion of public spending in the regions. The growth corridor along the M4 gets no regional aid, yet its success is underpinned by the public sector - Heathrow, the motorway, high-speed trains and universities."

The need to contain state expenditures and support "regional self-help" brought about significant revisions of physical planning policy. In County Durham central government used its powers to modify the structure plan in line with post-modern developments in national policy. The County Council had abandoned the controversial Category "D" policy in 1977 following local opposition, but it retained a settlement strategy based on twelve major designated centres in which housing development was to be concentrated. The Structure Plan also identified eighteen major industrial sites linked to these major housing centres. As required by the legislation, objections to the Structure Plan were heard at an Examination in Public in December 1979. This instrument is strongly biased towards the interests of central government. It deals

only with matters which the Secretary of State considers need examination in public, and the Secretary of State decides who shall participate in the examination, whether or not they have made objections or representations (Cullingworth, 1985, p. 73).

Following the Examination in Public of the Durham Structure Plan the Panel disagreed with the County Council's settlement categorisation policy (Policy 7 in the Structure Plan, which named about 100 towns and villages where development was to be limited to divert resources into the major centres) and stated that it was too site specific and inflexible (11). Strategic spatial policy was no longer to be supported. Following the Panel's report, the Secretary of State announced that he

"... considers that the level of detail in Policy 7 as submitted is inappropriate to a structure plan and that District Councils should be allowed to determine the locations of housing development." (12).

The Plan was accordingly modified and approved with effect from February 1981.

It is necessary to place this episode in context. The end of the post-war era of modernisation and organised capitalism saw increasing pressure on the planning system to relax spatial controls and respond more flexibly to market forces. The 1968 Town and Country Planning Act ended the system of county "development plans", which were essentially strategic and detailed statements of development proposals for physical, economic and social reconstruction in which it was expected that the

state would have a major role. County development plans had been the land-use framework for modernisation. The 1968 Act replaced them with county structure plans, which were designed to be much more responsive to changing patterns of capital accumulation and to "the resources likely to be available" (Cullingworth, 1985, p. 61). With the increasingly flexible nature of accumulation, structure plans came in for growing criticism as being too insensitive to changing conditions, especially with regard to capital's decisions when and where to invest. Demands grew for an "entrepreneurial approach" to planning (Ball, 1983, p. 271). This implied a relaxation of planning control and a shift in planning powers from the strategic county level to the local district level where market forces could exert more influence. These changes were introduced by the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act.

Similar changes occurred in Northern Ireland, where in 1972 the planning system was brought broadly into line with the British system and, under Direct Rule, was administered directly by the British Government. The growth centre strategy of the Matthew Plan was revised in the mid-1970s by the Regional Physical Development Strategy 1975-95 (Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, 1976). The new strategy replaced the sixteen growth centres of the Development Programme 1970-75, which had continued Matthew's focus on the Belfast sub-region, with twenty-three "district towns" throughout Northern Ireland. The Matthew Plan's prime growth centre, the new town of Craigavon, became a glorified district town and was to grow "at a slower pace than actually envisaged" (13). Certain country towns were designated as local centres and larger villages would be allowed limited expansion if they had adequate

existing facilities and were near district towns. In line with the shift in Britain from 1976 of investment away from new towns and into inner cities, the "regeneration" of the Belfast inner-city was to be a priority. In addition, the emphasis of housing policy in Northern Ireland also shifted from redevelopment to rehabilitation of the existing stock (Parson, 1981). Instead of creating new locales for accumulation by developing greenfield sites on a large scale, policy was now directed towards containing problems in the older urban areas and selectively revalorising parts of these areas with "investment potential" on which public spending was targetted.

The Regional Physical Development Strategy 1975-95 placed new emphasis on the containment of public expenditure. Rural populations in particular were identified as often too costly to reproduce, and the Strategy stated that:

"The disposition of the rural population in somewhat more concentrated form will permit greater efficiency and economy in the provision of schools, postal, health and social services, water, sewerage and electricity ... Housing developments will be very limited in the more remote villages, which in themselves have poor employment prospects, and from which daily travel to work elsewhere is difficult." (Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, 1976, pp. 82, 86)

The Regional Physical Development Strategy was accompanied by a policy statement which generally ruled out planning permission for residential development outside selected settlements, unless applicants could prove a need to live in the countryside (14). The move sparked off extensive protests from farmers and district councils in rural areas where

dispersed settlement patterns were seen as threatened in the same way as the Category "D" villages in County Durham (Caldwell and Greer, 1984). The Cockcroft Committee was set up to review the policy in 1977. Its report, published the following year, attacked the policy and called for a return to a more laissez-faire approach (Cockcroft, 1978). In the early post-modern climate of the late 1970s this found a sympathetic response at central government level. Caldwell and Greer (1984, p. 13) suggest that the Cockcroft Report was assimilated very rapidly, as almost immediately after its publication the rate of approvals of planning applications for residential development in rural areas rose markedly above the rate during 1976-78, when development control policy appeared to be aimed at meeting the target populations of the district towns. Thus, as in County Durham, although the local state substantially relaxed the growth centre modernisation strategy while attempting to continue with its basic features, it was largely abandoned following the Thatcher Government's intervention to relax controls on market processes.

The changes to the planning system made by central government in England and Wales by the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act were extended to Northern Ireland by a Ministerial announcement in August 1981. This stated that the presumption must always be in favour of granting planning permission, and that the planning authority must not impose constraints on the physical form of developments where these are a matter of "aesthetics" (Alcorn, 1981). As Ball (1983a, p. 271) comments:

"At times of economic crisis the economic needs of society become paramount, which to the corporatist means the direct and immediate interests of capital. Hence 'we need the entrepreneurial approach to planning'. By refusing to recognise that its intervention is a political one into an arena of class struggle rather than an exercise in social harmony, this ideology of planning converts planners into an elite operating in the interests of dominant social forces ... Planning is not in crisis because the notion of a planned society has failed in practice; instead an elitist form of planning is collapsing under its own contradictions."

## 2.5 Housing in the post-modern era

The main elements of "early postmodernist" housing policy have been a reduction in the output of state housing and measures to expand owner-occupation. This has been accompanied by an ideology which not only encourages the consumption of housing as a commodity but also as an image, a development typical of the "postmodernist sensibility" of disorganised capitalism, itself largely a reaction to modernism (see Lash and Urry, 1987, pp. 285-300).

Although nationally output started to decline in both the public and private sectors from the late 1960s, the decline was more marked in the public sector, particularly since 1977 (Ball, 1983a, pp. 1-22). The national output of new council housing went into sharp decline following the public expenditure cuts of 1976 implemented by the Labour Government, which had abandoned the Keynesian Welfare State strategy in the face of the continuing economic crisis (CSE State Apparatus and Expenditure Group, 1979, pp. 27-34). In 1977 Housing Investment Programmes were introduced in England to control councils' building (Leather, 1983). This was followed by dramatic cut-backs forced on



local councils' housing investment by the Thatcher Government elected in 1979, and sharp rent rises. Council housebuilding took the brunt of the Government's commitment to reduce public expenditure. The cuts were accompanied by a series of measures which curtailed individual local authorities' discretion to make policy decisions for their areas (Dunleavy and Rhodes, 1983). Aspects of the effects of these events are illustrated in the case studies of subsequent chapters.

In the UK as a whole public sector completions fell from 170,200 in 1977 to 109,800 in 1980 and to 55,100 in 1983, a decline over the whole period of 68 per cent (15). In the "growth centre" areas where there had been vigorous modernising housing programmes, the collapse of public sector output was even more dramatic. In County Durham public completions fell from 1,401 in 1977 to 973 in 1979/80 and to 270 in 1982/83, a decline over the whole period of 81 per cent (16). In the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Southern Region, including the district council areas of Craigavon, Armagh, Banbridge and Newry/Mourne, Housing Executive completions fell from 1,354 in 1977/78 to 572 in 1979/80 and to 272 in 1982/83, a decline over the whole period of 80 per cent (17).

In County Durham the decline was not compensated for by an increase in private sector output as early post-modern strategy intended (Ball, 1982). Although private dwelling completions rose from 1,311 in 1977 to 1,691 in 1979/80, they fell back to 1,037 in 1982/83, a decline over the whole period of 21 per cent (18). It was not possible to obtain data on private sector completions over this period for the Housing Executive's

Southern Region or district council areas, but in Northern Ireland as a whole private sector completions increased from 3,100 in 1977 to 3,600 in 1980 but stayed at 3,600 in 1983, a rise of over the whole period of 16 per cent, which certainly suggested a degree of "crowding out" by state housing (19). However, total output in Northern Ireland declined by 15 per cent over this period.

As noted above, the rehabilitation of the existing private housing stock became an increasingly important component of housing policy from the late 1960s compared with redevelopment. Retaining traditional housing forms was popular following the experience of mass state housing during the 1950s and '60s, and rehabilitation supported a home ownership centred housing policy. In Northern Ireland there was a dramatic increase in the number of renovation grants made to private owners from 2,346 in 1973 to 28,933 in 1983, a rise of 1,133 per cent (20). This reflected the impact of the 1976 Housing Order which switched resources from redevelopment into renovation following the deepening economic crisis at the end of the modernisation era and community struggles against displacement (Parson, 1981). Up until then renovation had played a small part in housing action in the province. However, between 1973 and 1983 the number of renovation grants made to private owners and tenants in the Northern Region of England (Northumberland, Cumbria, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Cleveland) fell from 23,100 to 16,800, a decline of 27.3 per cent, despite an increase in Britain as a whole of 55.3 per cent (21). This reflected the impact of HIP cuts, combined with local authorities' decisions about where available funds should go.

Despite variations between County Durham and North Armagh, the main effect on housing of the end of modernisation was broadly the same: the rapid decline in the output of mass state housing brought about by central government. This appears not to have been done because housing conditions for the working class had now been "modernised" - modernisation had been legitimized as improving housing conditions - but because accumulation no longer demanded modern growth centres on this scale. This phase of accumulation had passed, and the housing in which employed workers were to have lived, and paid their rents, was occupied by large numbers of unemployed, supported by social security. In fact, on official indicators, there was a marked slowing down in improvements in housing conditions in North England, Northern Ireland and England during the course of the 1970s when the rate of housebuilding was falling sharply. This is shown in Table 2.3.

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Table 2.3: CHANGES IN HOUSING CONDITIONS: NORTH ENGLAND\*, NORTHERN IRELAND AND ENGLAND, 1971-1984.

	Northern Ireland			North England			England		
	1974	1979	1984	1971	1976	1981	1971	1976	1981
lacking one or more amenities	26%	18%	9%	20%	10%	5%	18%	9%	5%
unfit	20%	14%	10%	11%	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%
need major repairs**	***	15%	14%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%

Notes:

- \* North West, North, Yorkshire and Humberside.
- \*\* In North England, £7,000 and over (1981 prices); in Northern Ireland £7,000 and over (1984 prices).
- \*\*\* Not available.

Sources: See note 22.

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"Early Post-modernist" housing policies were entrenched and extended following the New Right's success in the 1979 General Election. The 1980 Housing Act re-asserted market relationships in housing and the imagery of owner-occupation, underpinned by a restructuring of state subsidies to encourage the consumption of housing in the private sector. Shifferes (1980, p. 10) comments:

"The 1980 Housing Bill is one of the most wide-ranging Bills ever introduced into Parliament ... (T)he heart of the Bill is the collection of proposals for the council sector: the right to buy, the tenants' charter, and the new subsidy system. Taken together these add up to the most far-reaching changes in the council housing system since its effective origins at the end of the First World War."

Schifferes (pp. 10-11) argues that the Act was based on a number of assumptions which biased its provisions in favour of owner-occupation. These included assertions about the inherent desirability of home ownership even though its expansion would be dependent on subsidies and discounts, the need to retain and rehabilitate old private housing, the drastic reduction of council housebuilding because of its "over-subsidized" and "inefficient" reputation to residual special needs, and the need for measures to force the sale of land and reduce planning controls.

The political-ideological structures of modernisation were under attack - especially the role of local government in providing housing. The strengthening of the role of the market could be legitimated in terms of the failure of post-war state intervention in housing, especially the mass state housing areas of high-rise bloc s and large, isolated

peripheral estates created by modernist architects and planners for anonymous "clients". There was pressure from below for change, and the political conditions were right for the introduction of radical "solutions". The 1980 Housing Act's central objective was the recommodification of housing (see Harloe, 1981). That this threatened to intensify the significant inequities and inefficiencies in the UK housing system seemed irrelevant; state intervention in housing had not worked (Malpass, 1986; Labour Housing Group, 1984). The achievement of this objective necessitated a restructuring of the relationship between central government and local government, as many local councils did not support these changes, and this was achieved most obviously by the withdrawal of central government subsidy to council housing (Gibson, 1981).

Nationally, state expenditure on housing was cut by 61 per cent between 1979/80 and 1984/85. During the same period subsidies to owner-occupiers in the forms of mortgage interest tax relief, capital gains tax exemption and renovation grants increased substantially. "Early post-modernism" did not involve any substantial reduction in government financial support for housing, but a significant restructuring in support towards privatised consumption and circulation. Robinson (1986) shows that between 1979/80 and 1984/85 there were substantial reallocations of state expenditure rather than aggregate cuts:

"(I)t ... appears that the nearly £1 billion reduction in central government grants to Local Authorities was offset by a similar increase in rent rebates ... In cash terms the increase in improvement grant expenditure of £0.6 billion more than offset the £0.5 billion reduction in new public sector investment ... it is noticeable that the targetting of subsidies onto lower-income

groups, which had become a major feature of Local Authority housing subsidization, has not been extended to the assistance provided for private improvement investment." (pp. 6-7)

Byrne (1985b) critically reviews postmodernist housing policy in the North East, with special reference to urban Tyneside, and links it with the growing problem of disrepair in low income housing (public and private), the collapse of council building and the residualisation of council estates. He concludes that national housing policy in the 1980s was having little to do with "good housing for all".

Problems were not restricted to urban Tyneside. In County Durham, Derwentside had the third highest proportion of unpopular difficult-to-let council dwellings in England in 1980 - 24 per cent, compared with 6 per cent for the country as a whole (Matthews and Shaw, 1981). Sedgefield had the second highest proportion of its total housing stock needing more than £2,000 of repairs - 36 per cent, compared with 10 per cent for England as a whole. The new legislation was fairly marginal to these problems, which demanded considerable public expenditure (see Cantle, 1986).

The 1980 Housing Act introduced a range of measures to boost rehabilitation in the private sector, with the aim of saving older housing from demolition (Balchin, 1985, pp. 79-80). However it failed to reform a complex grant system and, despite enhanced expense limits and percentage grant rates, it relaxed standards of improvement and grant conditions. In the case of intermediate grants councils could no longer insist that the dwelling was brought up to what the council

regarded as a good standard with a minimum fifteen year life. The only requirement would be that the dwelling must be fit. The five year repayment rule for owner-occupiers was abolished and the highest rates of grant were extended beyond just dwellings in Housing Action Areas. However bigger and better grants in theory did not mean this in practice. Many local authorities did not have the money to pay out because of cuts in Housing Investment Programme (HIP) allocations and other priorities.

Despite a national increase in grant expenditure from £134 million in 1979/80 to £700 million in 1983/84, reflecting the decline of redevelopment, very large HIP cuts from 1981 meant that many local authorities were only able to meet the demand for the mandatory intermediate and repair grants, and stopped improvement grants. These were reinstated when central government boosted funding for improvement at the end of 1982, so that it was conveniently in full swing during the 1983 General Election. By 1984 the proportion of total local authority capital spending on housing in England and Wales consumed by private sector improvement had quadrupled from 6 per cent in 1980/81 to 24 per cent in 1983/84 (Gibson, 1986, p. 105).

After the 1980 Housing Act local authorities attempting to demolish what they regarded to be substandard older housing found it increasingly difficult to obtain central government confirmation of compulsory purchase orders. The situation was strongly criticised by the Institution of Environmental Health Officers:

"It is now clear that the government does not intend to confirm compulsory purchase orders where owner/occupiers declare at the inquiry that they intend to carry out improvements. This policy is regrettable as it inhibits the ability of a local authority to deal with substandard houses ... There have already been a number of unfortunate examples where orders have not been confirmed despite recognition that the properties were unfit. The local authorities concerned now find themselves in an impossible position, the areas are deteriorating, the morale of the residents is low and there is no money available or willingness to undertake improvements" (Institution of Environmental Health Officers, 1981, pp. 9-10).

The redevelopment versus renewal issue had often been highly charged. It was frequently not technical arguments that won but political considerations. The Institution of Environmental Health Officers' report quoted above argues very strongly in favour of clearance and redevelopment, and asserts that "the nation must be prepared to pay the price of that intervention" (p. 12). One of the report's authors was Birmingham City Council's Chief Urban Renewal Officer. Stewart (1982) gives an interesting account of how members of this council approved costly and "uneconomic" expenditure on improvement in a marginal ward in Birmingham against their officers' advice (which was for replacement) for fear of losing the Asian vote. Etherington has described a similar situation on Tyneside, where he claimed that Labour councils were spending considerable amounts of their budgets on rehabilitating owner-occupied houses, not for efficiency and effectiveness but to avoid political damage (23). The main problem, as both the Institution of Environmental Health Officers and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities in their 1981 report Ruin or Renewal saw it, was that the type of housing that has been described in the present thesis as "near slums", where rehabilitation would often be cost-ineffective but which was not bad enough for clearance under Part III of the 1957 Housing Act,



would be left to deteriorate into "slums" (Stewart, 1982, p. 13). But there was a politics of housing renewal which often eclipsed the technical arguments, and local councils appear to have been moving towards more sensitive housing policies under these local pressures during the 1970s. However, following the 1980 Housing Act, the ability of local authorities to shape housing policies according to their own criteria became severely constrained.

During the modernisation era local housing market considerations were often secondary to strategic planning and large-scale spatial restructuring imperatives involving very large social investment and consumption expenditures by the state to accommodate the anticipated expansion of capital accumulation. In the "early post-modern era" central government used its powers to increase the pressure of local housing market factors in determining local planning and housing policy. Gibson (1986, pp. 119-120) describes the nature of this shift as it was expressed in renewal policy and as future developments were mapped out by the 1985 Green Paper Home Improvements: A New Approach. He argues that the new policies comprised a housing component of what is basically the "two nations" strategy discussed in chapter 1. A minimalist role for central government was being re-established, with the replacement of large scale redevelopment by "a token level" of subsidised clearance, by private improvement and the subsidisation of owner-occupation. The majority of comfortably housed people, he argues, have a vested interest in perpetuating housing policies which subsidise consumption in the private sector, but trap the marginalised into the most unpopular council housing and the worst owner-occupied housing, deteriorating at a

faster rate than it was being improved because it could not yield a sufficient return.

The shift to "early post-modern" housing policy was not as marked in Northern Ireland, where the risk of worsening the economic and political crises meant that, in general, state expenditure on housing, in relative terms, outpaced England following the Thatcher cuts (Singleton, 1986; Weir, 1983). The factors behind this are considered in chapter 7.

Table 2.4 shows the pattern for Northern Ireland.

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Table 2.4: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON HOUSING: NORTHERN IRELAND AND NORTH OF ENGLAND, 1975/6 to 1983/4.

	Northern Ireland £ per capita*	North of England £ per capita*	Britain
1977/78	185.3	168.3	
1978/79	191.3	178.8	
1979/80	189.1	183.9	
1980/81	207.0	160.9	
1981/82	187.5	118.4	
% change	+1.2%	-29.6%	-39.9%

Notes: \* Adjusted 1982/83 cash prices

Sources: see note 24.

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The 1980 Housing Act was not extended to Northern Ireland until 1983, but its main provisions were adopted by the Housing Executive in 1980.

Faced with a need to respond quickly to growing job losses and campaigning about poor housing conditions, the Thatcher government

boosted the Housing Executive's new build programme after initially cutting it, diverting money from industrial development, which was increasingly unsuccessful (25). However, the Housing Executive's enhanced new build programme from 1981 was on condition that rents were increased sharply so that tenants would bear more of the costs individually, as in Britain. Sales to sitting tenants would also generate a large proportion of this increased spending. In 1981/82 a 40 per cent rent increase was forced through by central government directive in the face of the Housing Executive Board's opposition (Brett, 1986, p. 113). The following year an increase of 19 per cent was agreed by the Board. But the growing number of voids in the large Housing Executive estates that had been built for the growth centres, together with an upturn in private sector activity stimulated by central government subsidies for shared ownership, resulted in central government pressure on the Executive to retreat from new build. In 1983 its target was reduced accordingly from 5,000 houses per annum to 3,200 following a major review of policy, the Corporate Strategy Review. This stated:

"... the Executive is now in the forefront in developing its own series of initiatives to encourage the provision of low-cost housing for sale, including the potential release of up to 260 acres of land in Executive ownership to private developers ... (T)he public sector should be prepared to step back from commitments where as a result of private sector activity over-provision could result. This demands a closer relationship between the public and private sector, with the Executive fulfilling a comprehensive role in the sense of providing market information, under certain circumstances sites, and if necessary surrendering funds to the private sector, rather than in the sense of being seen as the first source of housing provision." (26)

The post-1979 measures to privatise housing in Northern Ireland resulted in owner-occupied dwellings increasing as a proportion of all dwellings - from 49 per cent in 1978 to 57 per cent in 1983. In the North of England owner-occupation rose from 46 per cent in 1978 to 53 per cent in 1983 (27). Privatisation shifted responsibility for maintenance and repairs to the individual owner or mortgagor, which has been linked with rising rates of disrepair in the owner-occupied sector (Gibson, 1986; Karn, Doling and Stafford, 1986). "Early post-modern" housing policy also saw an increase in the proportion of household budgets spent on housing. In Northern Ireland housing costs increased as a proportion of average weekly household income from 8.8 per cent in 1978/79 to 11.1 per cent in 1982/83; in the North of England from 10.4 per cent to 11.7 per cent over the same period; and in the United Kingdom as a whole from 11.3 per cent to 12.7 per cent (28). This was partly due to house prices and interest rates rising faster than incomes, but public sector tenants experienced on average an even higher real increase in rents as central government used the new subsidy system to phase out general housing subsidies to the public sector, effectively "pushing" those who could afford it into owner-occupation, while resulting in a growing proportion of public sector tenants having to depend on rent rebates/housing benefit (Karn, Doling and Stafford, 1986; Gibson, 1981; Robinson, 1986; Singleton, 1986). The effect was increasingly to residualise state housing.

Thus, "early post-modernist" housing policy was being put into practice when the fieldwork for the present thesis began in 1980, and during the subsequent two years of fieldwork its effects were being felt throughout

the housing system, particularly in local government and among tenants. The postmodernist housing strategy was one of self-reliance and freedom of choice in a market place strongly underpinned by a framework of housing and planning policies supporting circulation. Shortly after the Conservative's 1979 election victory, the new Secretary of State for the Environment proclaimed this ideology in terms of rolling back the state - which had for too long subordinated the individual, destroyed communities and stifled enterprise - and freeing civil society from the state's interference in the market processes on which freedom itself depended:

"We intend to provide as far as possible the housing policies that the British people want. We propose to create a climate in which those who are able can prosper, choose their own priorities and seek the rewards and satisfactions that relate to themselves, their families and their communities. We shall concentrate the resources of the community increasingly on the members of the community who are not able to help themselves. In terms of housing policy, our priority of putting people first must mean more home ownership, greater freedom of choice of home and tenure, greater personal independence, whether as a home owner or tenant, and a greater priority on public resources for those with obvious and urgent need." (quoted in Lundqvist, 1986, pp. 2-3)

## 2.6 Summary and introduction to the case studies

County Durham and North Armagh were sub-regions of extensive spatial restructuring under "modernisation strategies" in housing and planning which supported a phase of accumulation by transnationals accommodated in "growth centres". The "modernisation era" was a period of expanding local expenditures and big local government which deprived many small communities of any control over the future of their areas or the new

environments which were being created. However, with the failure of the branch plant economies of County Durham and North Armagh and the disorganising of capitalism throughout the UK, modernisation and the local government system which had grown with it were increasingly under pressure during the 1970s, and effectively under attack from 1979. In planning this took the form of pressure for a more flexible regime to accommodate the decentralising of accumulation, while containing the costs of reproduction, and in housing pressure for recommodification and self-reliance. The Thatcher Government elected that year emphasised the failure of two decades of state intervention in housing to deliver what people wanted and presented a powerful image of a nation of home owners accumulating wealth. Its housing and planning policies were a major break with the past, despite previous trends in their direction, and have been summed up in the present thesis as "early post-modern" because their restructuring of reproduction, in which the expansion of circulation and market relationships and the intensification of differentiation have been central, appears to have marked an end to the local state as "moderniser" on the scale experienced in the 1950s and 1960s.

Other authors, such as Lash and Urry (1987), Gough (1986), Armstrong, Glyn and Harrison (1984), Scott and Storper (1986), Sayer (1986), Holloway (1987) and Harvey (1987), have described a parallel transition from "modern" to "post-modern" accumulation regimes by transnationals, moving from Fordism and "organised" capitalism to flexible specialisation and "disorganised" capitalism. Many aspects of the changes in housing and planning policy over this period appear to

constitute reproductive responses to this structural transition in the economic base of advanced capitalist states.

Modernisation in County Durham and North Armagh was associated with extensive local state involvement in spatial reorganisation and the construction of mass housing to create labour pools for large branch plants. This was accompanied by claims that the new environments promised a better future for the working class than the old industrial settlements. "Modernist" housing policy had redevelopment at its centre. It was argued in the chapter that the dominant local political leaderships in the two sub-regions were incorporated into political-ideological structures of modernisation, and emphasised its reformist and growth aspects to their constituencies. Policy-making in this era was top-down and "statist"; the sphere of reproduction dominated the sphere of circulation. It was also an era of community action as groups formed to stop local disruptions and the "modernisation" of housing environments (see Kraushaar's (1981) discussion, which considers how the transition to what in the present thesis is described as "post-modernism" has set a different agenda for community action).

Modernisation failed to resolve growing economic and political problems in the 1970s. Policy shifts in housing appeared to be closely connected with the increased differentiation in incomes and consumption patterns brought about by the disorganisation of capitalism and the abandonment of the Keynesian Welfare State strategy. State intervention in civil society was re-shaped, with growing tensions between local and central government in the process, to support expansion of the sphere of

circulation made up of self-reliant individuals and contraction of the sphere of reproduction and its "collectivism" (see chapter 1 for definitions of these terms). In particular, Government statements emphasised consumption of commodities as a sphere of personal autonomy which had been invaded by the state, and which would now be returned to the individual by expanding free enterprise, an essential part of democratic government. This was reflected in changes made to planning policies - from large-scale spatial restructuring to more localised and flexible policies for existing urban areas, targeting state expenditures on supporting entrepreneurialism and containing social expenses - and changes in housing policy - the decline of public expenditure on the direct provision of social housing and the expansion of recommodification and self-help measures.

The transition from "modernisation" to "early post-modernism" in housing and planning involved a major shift in central-local government power in County Durham, with increasing central intervention to control local authority expenditure, particularly on housing, as well as key aspects of local policy. Throughout Britain the ability of an individual local authority to determine its own housing policy was severely eroded in the name of macro-economic management by the central state, bringing local administration closer to the system of Direct Rule in Northern Ireland. The ability of local councils to intervene in civil society was reduced.

The next chapters present a series of case studies to show how these processes worked out at the level of particular localities in County Durham and North Armagh, where community groups formed either to oppose



local disruptions caused by modernising state interventions in civil society or to cope with state retrenchment in the "early post-modern era".

Chapter 3 is an account of the at times intense community struggles against spatial restructuring during the era of modernisation in County Durham. This took the form of action to defend Category "D" villages, settlements which were classified by the state as unviable while resources were concentrated on building up modern infrastructure and industry in the growth centres.

Chapter 4 is an account of experiences of two growth centres in the "early post-modern era" of the late 1970s/early 1980s where community action occurred, although weakly. The shorter account concerns a large housing estate built as an expansion of an existing town in County Durham. The longer account concerns a new town in the north-east of the county built to provide modern housing for miners and their families, and later incorporated into the growth centre strategy. Both are examples of how state intervention in housing during the post-war period came to be perceived as a failure.

Chapters 5 and 6 are accounts of community action in what were Category "A" growth settlements in County Durham under the modernisation strategy. The community action occurred in opposition to disruptive redevelopment proposals pursued by the local councils, but in the wider climate of the early post-modern era of the late 1970s/early 1980s, especially under the new policies of the 1980 Housing Act. The case

studies show how the transition to the post-modern period shaped the course of these struggles.

Chapter 7 moves the focus to North Armagh. It describes what emerge as parallel struggles to those of chapter 3 in the small "rural" communities bordering the major new growth centre of Craigavon and in the fringing old industrial centre of Lurgan. It is shown how the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was able to sustain redevelopment in the old urban centres within the Craigavon designated area longer than in County Durham. Housing expenditures were protected from repeated cuts in response to what appeared to be a concern about the legitimization implications for the British state in Northern Ireland if the tackling of high levels of official unfitness and unemployment was seen to be abandoned. However, redevelopment did not go smoothly, any legitimacy which the local state might have had in building successful communities having been shattered by the experience of Craigavon.

Chapter 8 describes the history of Craigavon and the new town sector itself, and the community action response to conditions in the new town sector in the early post-modern era.

In summary, the case studies describe a history of groups of people responding to the experience of modernisation and how the transition to "early post-modern" policies affected these experiences and actions. The accounts are related to the general themes of chapter 1 and the present chapter. An explanatory framework is proposed in chapter 9.

### CHAPTER 3

#### POST-WAR MODERNISATION IN COUNTY DURHAM: SPATIAL RESTRUCTURING AND COMMUNITY ACTION

This chapter discusses opposition to spatial restructuring in post-war County Durham as experienced through the local impact of restructuring housing and planning policies. These were based on a strategy of settlement categorisation which was pursued by the County Council in the 1950s-1960s as its contribution to the modernisation of the region. The material is drawn from primary and secondary sources. The chapter attempts to illustrate two aspects which are also identified in the other accounts of community action in subsequent chapters, and which are crucial to understanding the community action response to these policies.

First, spatial restructuring in County Durham was associated with a modernising ideology which promoted a disparaging picture of the old industrial settlements as disorderly slums and a positive image of the new growth centres and their mass housing estates as modern environments. For the working class people affected, however, there is evidence to show that the experience of the old settlements was often positive and of the new estates frequently negative. Often the modern ideology of political leaders and planners failed to make sense to many people against the actual experiences of these localities. A result was an officialdom-people relation of domination between the Labour Party controlled local state and many working class "communities".

Second, it was proposed in chapter 2 that the transition from modernisation to what were described as "early post-modern" housing and planning policies was a response to pressures caused by structural changes in the economy and the "disorganisation" of capitalism. At local level, however, other factors were at work. Many district councils in County Durham ended up opposing spatial restructuring under pressure from below before the policy was abandoned at strategic (county and national) levels; but ideologically they appeared to remain committed to elements of modernism in housing policy. This took the form of a commitment to redevelopment and state housing solutions to local housing problems, when national policy had shifted to retaining and improving old private housing, enhancing owner-occupation and residualising state housing. In addition, Durham County Council, although moderating spatial restructuring under pressure from below, only abandoned the policy when forced to by central government. Thus institutions of the state were not unified with regard to their strategies and policies and the early post-modern policies had to be constituted in localities politically from above, as shown by the examples of this and subsequent chapters. This question is returned to in chapter 9 after the empirical material has been presented to cast light upon the actual processes involved.

### 3.1 Locality and working class experience in County Durham

Settlement categorisation was, as Bulmer (1978) observes, associated with an ideology which negatively labelled the colliery houses and the pit villages as basically primitive, disorderly and of the past. This

continued through to the conflicts in the villages of Langley Park and Framwellgate Moor, considered in chapters 5 and 6, which occurred after the settlement categorisation issue had been decided. The ideology was not only a legitimisation of settlement categorisation but of modernising policies in general. Bulmer (1978, p. 178) quotes from Sharp's pamphlet of 1935, A Derelict Area: a study of the South-West Durham coalfield, which illustrates the type of elitist social reformism that was to imbue post-war planning in the county:

"These towns and villages are not such as civilized men (sic) should be expected to live in. They were ugly and mean from the very beginning and now most of them are outworn. If they are still to be inhabited, large parts of them will need to be rebuilt during the next few decades. Theoretically the simplest plan is to evacuate the whole territory."

Bulmer (1978) shows how state institutions viewed the "slums" in County Durham as threats to social cohesion and its own legitimacy, a point also made by Dunleavy (1981, p. 101) in his explanation of redevelopment in England in the 1950s and 1960s, and a factor which appears to have contributed to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive being able to sustain a modernising housing policy longer than in England (see chapter 7).

Chapter 2 argued that in County Durham the local state's response through its housing and planning policies to the economic situation after the Second World War was to pursue a strategy of restructuring the county's settlement pattern and re-grouping the working class into large labour pools in growth centres more attractive to transnational capital

and less costly to reproduce. Although it was viewed necessary for the local state to attempt to create "modern" conditions for accumulation through its planning and housing powers if their areas were to share in economic growth, it was also declared that better housing conditions for the working class were an important aim of the new plans. A very similar reformist component was evident in the Matthew Plan for the Belfast sub-region and in the development of Craigavon (see chapters 2, 8 and 9). However, once spatial restructuring ended with the abandonment of modernisation in County Durham and North Armagh, so did the reformist statements about universal improvements in living conditions.

Sharp's negative description of the pit villages is echoed in the Pepler-MacFarlane Report (1949), an economic development report for the North East which recommended the re-grouping of labour into local and regional centres. It argued that many villages should be depopulated and not rebuilt. However thirty years later national policy had largely turned around - by 1979 when the Examination in Public of the Durham County Structure Plan took place the emphasis was on the rehabilitation of existing housing, virtually no greenfield development and a much reduced role, if any, for strategic state planning. The post-war growth centre strategy in County Durham had been undermined by capitalist restructuring, which appears to have taken the form of a transition from a modern regime of Fordist capital accumulation to a post-modern regime of flexible accumulation, rather than a straightforward pattern of branch plant closures. The changes wrought by this transition have included a re-shaping of physical and social space, such as the

activities of the Urban Development Corporations, new "consumption cultures" arising from commodity differentiation, and new forms of struggle against exploitation and domination in its post-modern guises (Harvey, 1987). In the growth centres of the modern era there were now large surpluses of labour in the modern housing estates and under-used modern infrastructure. But local councils in County Durham dominated by "old guard" Labourism stayed essentially modernist, and their approach to older dwellings in the villages remained based on the negative image of colliery housing. Housing conflicts emerged about redevelopment versus rehabilitation within "localities" rather than about any large-scale spatial reorganisation, indicating a contraction of modernism into the housing policies of district councils (see chapters 5 and 6).

The negative labelling of colliery houses was not without justification. Conditions in these houses between the wars had been very bad. One description by a retired Durham miner gives a lucid picture of the back-to-backs which were built in large numbers to house the colliery workforces:

"The houses were not good. They were built back to back - no ventilation. Backside was an open sewer with pig styes in it. All pouring into the beck. In 1924-25 all the back streets were ash. People threw their fire ashes out to keep the passages dry. Then they later paved the sewers and drains in with granite blocks. Before then many of the drains had collapsed, many were overflowing, effluent in back yards. Diptheria was rife and so was smallpox, and scarlet fever. We had an isolation hospital up near Helmington Row. Nothing else but fever cases were up at Homelands. The number of bairns that died of diptheria was no-one's business, T.B. too." (Machell, 1979; p. 48)

However, by the end of the 1960s this housing type had been largely cleared away by the local councils; what were left were mostly the "near slums" referred to in chapter 2. Residents often had a very different view about these houses, which could be rehabilitated to satisfactory standards, to local councils. But modernist housing policy tended to tar them with the same brush as the inter-war slums. One summing up of the situation which would have certainly met with the agreement of many of Durham's villagers was made by Ted Nicklin, an architect who worked with community groups opposing settlement categorisation and redevelopment in the North East:

"The question is, why do these practices continue, despite years of Whitehall encouragement of rehabilitation and renewal. My suggestion is that there remains in many people's minds - councillors, officers, and the public too - a conception of housing as a problem to be 'solved', rather than as a basic human activity which a housing authority can either help and encourage, or thwart and distort. The problem/solution approach to housing is amenable to bureaucratic processes; it is essentially a game of numbers. The activity view is altogether different; organisationally messy, since it involves people in all their diversity, and politically difficult to grasp since it must cross and re-cross so many well-marked political guidelines on ownership, tenure, subsidy, and tax rebate. Perhaps there is a new generation of politicians to replace the jaded heavies of the last two disastrous decades of public sector housing policy. We certainly hope so." (29)

This architect emphasises an important feature of the people-officialdom relation in modernist housing policy - that the policy was often imposed on local populations which had no or minimal involvement in policy-making and whose concept of "the problem" was often very different to the local council. There are also echoes of Saunders' (1986a) argument that given a loss of autonomy and fulfilment in paid employment, the sphere of consumption offers an opportunity for personal control and



autonomy. It follows from such a perspective that state housing, of the form produced on a massive scale during the modernisation era, should have become the major target of "anti-statist" criticisms because it excluded its "clients" from making choices about their housing.

Alternatively, although not wholly dismissing this point, the perceived failure of state intervention in housing may be interpreted as a result of its production under capitalist conditions as a means of reproduction during the post-war boom, with a quantitative expansion but a qualitative decline compared with early council housing, which had been produced explicitly to transform working class housing qualitatively (see chapter 2). What has to be determined in the present study is whether community struggles against modernisation were struggles for a sphere of personal autonomy which could exist within a society based on a capitalist economy, or whether these were struggles against state institutions undertaking reproductive strategies, and thus essentially class struggles (Cockburn, 1978, pp. 158-184).

Housing issues played an important part in the Labour Party coming to power in County Durham, committed to council housing as the best alternative for the working class to colliery houses. Chapter 2 discussed the high level of council housing activity in the county between the wars and the readiness of councils under Labour control to step in and make up for the failures of private enterprise once enabling legislation was passed. This commitment to council housing continued during the post-war period, including during the 1970s when the Labour Party nationally associated owner-occupation with "social advance", against a background of declining support for council housing and a

growing crisis in the structure of provision associated with it (Ball, 1985). Even in the early 1980s some councils in the county were still committed to clearance and council rebuilding as the central activity of their housing departments.

With spatial restructuring in County Durham abandoned after 1979, and an end to central government support for expanding local government expenditure, there was no longer provision for new council building and redevelopment on any scale. Such intervention conflicted with "post-modern" housing priorities, primarily recommodification and greater self-reliance through home ownership and self-help housing. In addition, conditions in the older housing stock which remained after the large-scale clearances of the 1960s were failing to generate local support for the replacement of what were not seen by residents as unhealthy houses. Local people faced with "slum clearance" not only began to oppose losing their houses on the grounds that their "communities" would be destroyed, but also because this housing was so much better than the state housing that was available in the growth centres. They did not want to exchange their old terraced home in a "community" for a modern council house on an estate. A graphic local view of this, which brings out the reproductive aspect of mass housing very well, is the following account by the secretary of Wear Valley Trades Council:

"We all call the housing estates 'reservations'. That's just what they are. The council have rehoused people, but that's all they've done. They've stuck people in one part of the town, built a few houses and that's it; there are hardly any shops on them even. This is where they expect people to live and this is the environment they expect people to respect ... They expect some sort of respect just

because the council build houses. But people weren't allowed to be involved in the creation of the estates, or in the type of housing. People have no say. Middle class architects design houses in a middle class type for working class people who haven't got the resources to keep up with any middle class concepts. Who can afford £13 rent from £38 net pay that some get from the factories in Crook? People from Stanley moved to Billy Row. All these houses had expensive central heating installed. Some of them were getting bills for £70 to £100 a quarter, having moved from comparatively cheap housing with coal fires. With an open fire you have some flexibility. If you're short of money you can go to the woods and get some timber or go to the slag heap. But in Billy Row this wasn't possible. There was only one form of heating available" (Ayre, 1979, p. 14).

This experience of the social relations of a particular type of housing provision, mass state housing, which dominated housing provision in the modernisation era, was of crucial importance in shaping popular views about local state intervention in civil society in County Durham. However, as the present thesis attempts to illustrate, housing consumption experiences were determined to a very large degree by the changing position of particular localities in processes of uneven development.

### 3.2 The struggle against Category "D", opposition to "statism" and the Durham County Housing Association

As discussed in chapter 2, the most controversial component of settlement categorisation was the designation of Category "D" villages. Perhaps the most well-known Category "D" village in the county was Witton Park, not in fact a pit village but originally built to house workers for the South Durham Iron and Steel Company. The Pepler-MacFarlane Report (1949) had stated bluntly of the village:

"Witton Park and Escomb should be wholly depopulated and returned to agriculture ... Eldon Lane and Coundon Grange are in an area terribly cut up by railways, sidings and collieries, and not fit for human habitation. We recommend the removal of the entire population." (p. 181)

Snowdon (1979), who was actively involved as a senior council officer in implementing the Category "D" policy, but later critically re-assessed the approach, describes Witton Park in the abstract to his MA thesis as:

"... the devastated archetype Category 'D' village, a victim of prejudice and time seemingly forever to bear a slum label as a shrine to the County Development Plan."

He sums up housing action in the area during the 1960s in the following terms:

"It is contended that undue attention was paid by bureaucracy to a distorted image of slum housing which resulted in extensive and excessive demolition with consequential individual and collective injustice; and that an almost excessive over-emphasis on physical aspects destroyed the territorial basis of community life, and ignored people and their aspirations."

It has been argued above that redevelopment was legitimated in terms of removing disorderly slums and of the prospect of rising working class housing standards. As it is unlikely that many ordinary people read the reports of these times, this attempt at legitimation was probably aimed at local political leaders whose incorporation into the planning machinery and programmes of expanding local expenditures was a marked feature of modernisation. In addition, environmental professionals working in the local councils generally accepted the premises and

approaches of modernism, especially its promise to transform social conditions by transforming space, even though this was an ideology generated by construction interests (Dunleavy, 1981). They were in positions to exert a dominant influence on housing and planning policy at the local level (Etherington, 1982; Snowdon, 1979; Hadden, 1974). It was difficult to disagree with them, as report after report emphasised the "logic" of the modernisation solution. Hailsam's North East Study of 1963 continued to promulgate this influential analysis:

"The present uneven spread of economic activity and the wide disparity in employment opportunities are socially harmful and economically inefficient. Our plan is to narrow the gap by creating the conditions in which more jobs will be provided in growing concerns within the region. In so far as it succeeds it should enhance the prospects for growth in the economy as a whole as well as making the region a better place to live in." (quoted in Carney and Hudson, 1974, p. 12)

The North East Study's policy of concentrating investments in selected centres was recognised as having costs outside of these centres, and this was legitimated as follows:

"The concentration of effort on the growth zone is bound to mean a relative worsening in the prospects for local industrial jobs in places outside it ... This is the price which has to be paid for faster economic development of the region as a whole." (quoted in Carney and Hudson, 1976, p. 14)

When Witton Park was designated as Category "D" by the Durham County Development Plan this was not a price that the residents were prepared to pay. A Defence Committee was formed in 1954 at a meeting organised by the village's two Labour councillors, who subsequently resigned from

the Labour Group in protest against the designation. They criticised what they saw as the Labour Group's view that the village was largely a slum that was best depopulated and demolished, and preferred to fight to save the village unbounded by Labour Group decisions (30).

Snowdon (1979) presents a wealth of evidence to show that Witton Park was a vigorous community when it was declared a Category "D" village. Despite this the Defence Committee was not successful and the population fell from about 6,000 to around 300 people as a result of extensive demolition (31). Many residents were rehoused in Bishop Auckland's Woodhouse Close Estate, which became a residualised ghetto in the closing years of modernisation and was identified as a "problem estate", with a Family Support Unit established in 1973 (32). Snowdon (1979, p. 205) writes that:

"On being moved to Woodhouse Close Estate, where trellises and fences were banned, every fourth door painted olive green, and only standard size greenhouses allowed, they had the benefit of modern houses at higher rents, and for a long time they experienced social isolation; for the elderly problems posed cast deeper shadows because they no longer had the resilience of youth. In the 1963 Written Statement to the County Development Plan, First Review the County Planning Officer wrote:

'Many villages suffer from lack of support because younger people demand a wider range of better facilities which are not available and cannot be provided within each village. The need to provide a better quality social life and recreational facilities can only be met by concentrating development in selected areas'

At Woodhouse Close for many years there was a complete lack of play areas and social facilities. Even now provision is minimal, and over a period of almost twenty five years Witton Park exiles have regularly returned to their village to enjoy the social life offered, though on a much reduced scale."

Community action in South West Durham about settlement categorisation was more intense than in any other part of the county because the threat to existing communities was greater given the degree of decline of the coal industry in the area. In 1967 the County Redevelopment of Villages Action Committee (CROVAC) was formed by several Independent councillors elected on the Category "D" issue, representing Coundon Grange, Binchester, Newfield and Witton Park, with the objective of rescuing the villages threatened by the policy. Its main activities were in the Gurney Valley, and the Eldon Lane area in particular. An action committee, the Eldon Lane and District Redevelopment Association (ELDRA), had already been formed in this area in 1962 to protest against Category "D" designation and seek support for village rehabilitation. CROVAC conducted a political campaign, putting up candidates in both district and county elections, but its influence was limited by the small number of candidates it could field (33). Its anti-Labour Party activities included inviting Geoffrey Ripon and Jeremy Thorpe to meetings to speak out against Category "D".

In addition to campaigning, some residents decided that practical action had to be taken to preserve the housing stock in the villages, and were able to take advantage of the shift in national housing policy towards rehabilitation in the late 1960s. By forming the Durham County Housing Association (DCHA), which arose out of CROVAC, they were able to develop an alternative to the local council's policies of redevelopment and, until 1976, of conforming to the County Council's restructuring strategy. The DCHA was essentially a private non-profit making housing association and was not involved in campaigning or local politics. It

illustrated the point, repeated in other case studies, that in resisting local council policy residents turned to a combination of self-help and the private market, actions which were thoroughly consistent with post-modern strategy. The ideological assertion that this would give people greater personal autonomy is questionable in the case of the history of the DCHA.

The DCHA was established to rehabilitate old housing in the villages for sale to tenants. It did not register with the Housing Corporation and had no tenants on its committee, which its secretary considered would "just delay things" (34). The houses were bought with bank overdrafts and council mortgages, and rehabilitated with council improvement grants, although the Abbey National Building Society was involved on an experimental basis in improving five houses in Eldon Lane, a former Housing Action Area. The DCHA also completely bought the small village of Binchester when it was a General Improvement Area. One hundred and twenty old colliery houses were refurbished and allocated through "personal contact". Its activities were not well received by many local Labour councillors, who saw the DCHA as a private business selling houses, charging high rents and failing to maintain good environmental standards (35).

The DCHA's secretary was an ex-chairperson of the local council's housing committee who had resigned from the Labour Group of Bishop Auckland Urban District Council in 1966, had served as an Independent member and had finally resigned from the council in 1979. Its housing manager was a former chairperson of the council. They were clearly



disaffected by the council's modernist housing policy and "council bureaucracy", but needed public sector support. The DCHA received council grants and mortgages during the 1960s and early '70s when Bishop Auckland UDC was under non-Labour control as a result of Labour's electoral losses over the Category "D" issue (see below). During the early 1970s central government support enabled enhanced rates of grant to be made in assisted areas. However, grants continued to be made after Labour had regained control of the new Wear Valley District Council in 1974, as rehabilitation was by now emphasised as a priority in central government allocations (see chapter 2). Over the next five years almost £0.5 million was paid out by Wear Valley to the DCHA (36). But the Association was electorally unaccountable and suspicions about the quality of its management and its services were fuelled by a series of local newspaper articles which appeared from the late 1970s.

In 1979 there was a police investigation into the sale of eighty-six houses in Eldon Lane and Coundon Grange to the DCHA by the Cussins Estates, but no evidence of illegality was found (37). In July residents in Binchester complained that promised improvements to their village had not materialised and that refurbished houses still had damp problems and had not been inspected (38). The DCHA's secretary was advising purchasers to use the Association's own solicitors to buy houses in Binchester (breaching Law Society rules about solicitors acting for both parties in a house sales transaction) and residents claimed that they were not told before they bought their houses that they would be responsible for improving the roads, being led to believe that the roads would be made up by the council under a General

Improvement Area (39). The Binchester scheme had been discussed at a meeting of Bishop Auckland UDC on March 30, 1971, when the DCHA's secretary was chairperson of the housing committee. The press reported that the financial details were missing from the minutes and there was no record of the chair declaring an interest in the matter.

The DCHA came under fire in local newspapers from several Labour councillors. It was claimed that people were suffering long delays while they waited for the Association to improve their unfit houses. The DCHA replied to these criticisms, arguing that the Association's waiting list of people wanting rehousing from council estates, including the infamous Bessemer Park (see chapter 4), was "a mile long" (40). The reason that people had to live in unfit DCHA properties in Ferryhill Station was, the DCHA claimed, that it had been waiting for improvement grants from the council. Negotiations were now underway with a larger, registered housing association, the Three Rivers Housing Association, to buy the properties.

In October 1979 the Labour Leader of Wear Valley District Council called for an inquiry into DCHA owned properties at Eldon Lane, where it emerged that twenty-five houses were to be bricked up until money or buyers became available (41). The council decided to prepare a report on the houses, following the example of Sedgefield Council in the case of DCHA properties bought from the National Coal Board in Ferryhill Station. One Sedgefield Labour member "demanded council action to make the association improve its derelict houses or sell up" and the local Labour MP called for a full investigation into the DCHA (42). Several

local newspaper reports appeared suggesting that the DCHA was in financial trouble.

The DCHA rode these controversies, confident that national policy developments were strongly in its favour, and in 1981 it was planning to expand (43). Its assets were worth £2.5m. However, at least some local Labour district council members felt that it was not maintaining and managing its housing properly, conscious of the fact that their own new build programmes had been cut back by central government not only to recommodify housing provision but also because of the cost of maintaining and managing council estates (44).

The DCHA was all that remained of the Category "D" opposition in the early 1980s, and was basically a "non-political" agency based in the housing market in rehabilitated working class homes. The opposition had, however, turned Wear Valley District Council against County Council policy in 1976 (see below), but this had not made many Labour councillors any less hostile to the DCHA, even though there was agreement that the villages should have secure futures. Like CROVAC, the DCHA appeared to be closely connected with petit bourgeois/middle strata interests in the villages and resisted settlement categorisation not only out of an attachment to the social life of the villages but also because of its negative impact on local businesses and the local housing market. Many working class residents of the villages had a vested interest in supporting this resistance; they had recently become owner-occupiers. The following local account suggests that this had a significant effect on popular attitudes which laid an important part of

the ideological basis for "post-modern" attacks on the Keynesian Welfare State:

"Another important thing in this village has been the purchase of houses. The Coal Board offered all sitting tenants their houses to purchase in 1966. You got them for about £250; and that was quite a bargain. The people who had been made redundant got somewhere between £500 and £800 in redundancy money and they used this to purchase the houses. Most people did that ... it's changed the whole environment. People have got a different outlook altogether. People are now getting the idea that 'I own my own property'. To give an instance, if someone owns a house and he has a car, he'll stand his car at that door. Suppose somebody wants to pass; 'Wey, move your car'. 'Wey, what do I want to move me car for? It's standing at me own door, it's me own property'. And it rather disturbs you to think that they came through the struggle. It's a different situation, different person, and it disturbs me sometimes" (Alsop, G., 1979, p. 30).

### 3.3 Political struggles against settlement categorisation

CROVAC fielded candidates against the Labour Party and in 1964 a major local political upset was caused when Labour lost control of Bishop Auckland UDC due to the electoral success of Independent candidates who opposed Category "D". These Independents were in the main from professional and small business backgrounds - others had defected from the Labour Party - and they formed various alliances with Conservatives and Civics (Snowdon, 1979, pp. 4-26). Their outlook was in general anti-modernising and they gained considerable local support for their demands that old communities be retained. Their backgrounds contrasted with the domination of the local Labour Party by miners and other manual workers whose outlook remained modernising but whose political support was weakened by the working class experience of modernisation. Between 1964 and 1970 Labour lost nine councillors in five major Category "D"

settlements in Bishop Auckland UDC. Some of the new Independent councillors were from working class backgrounds and initially stood as Independent Labour candidates.

The political position of the Independents was not strong - they came to power on a protest vote in a number of small localities. The corporatist re-organisation of local government in 1974 made the Labour Party less electorally vulnerable to very localised protest, and Labour re-gained control of the new Wear Valley District Council. The Independents became isolated and effectively powerless.

CROVAC and the Independent councillors had formed the leadership for working class resistance to Category "D". There was little alternative, for as Snowden (1979; abstract page) writes:

"The irony of a working class political machine, over which the population had virtually no influence, imposing a policy which destroyed working class life styles is noted, together with the creation of a bitter and inflexible climate which nurtured an unintended but resolute opposition and resulted in a change of political control at local level."

The extensive demolition, refusals of planning permission and cuts in services to the villages saw twenty-five years of community-based resistance to settlement categorisation in County Durham. The battle was particularly intense in Bishop Auckland. Snowden (45) offered the following reflections on this period:

"Pre-1970s councils were brainwashed into demolition. They used simple sub-items of the 1957 Act and were supported by the Government. I declared houses unfit on, in retrospect, very shaky

grounds. But the Inspector always approved. Councillors didn't realise the implications of Category "D" at the time, and they couldn't lose face later. It was Labour Group policy handed down to them by the old guard. One councillor voted against Category "D" at the District Council and the other way at the County: it was County 'policy'. Callaghan (an Independent councillor) and the others had the interests of the villages at heart, and the only way they could support them was by leaving the Labour Group."

It would be very wrong, though, to conclude that there was no opposition to settlement categorisation from district Labour councillors. After an initial ambivalence, which Snowden (1979, pp. 15-17) suggests was largely due to a failure to appreciate the detailed implications of County Council policy, there was opposition to Category "D". A key factor, however, in bringing about this change of attitude was an influx of younger, more socially conscious councillors who replaced the "old guard" in the local Labour Party.

Following local government reorganisation and the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act, Wear Valley District Council acted on a suggestion made by the Bains Report (1972) and established their own planning department, appointing a qualified planning officer. In 1976, during preparation of the county structure plan, the council had the technical confidence to assert its own view on settlement categorisation and resolved that:

"This Council's policy is total opposition to the principle of Category "D", and will inform the County Council to that effect. This Council feels that all planning decisions for development in the respective villages should be treated on individual merit, and private development encouraged in order to retain and, where necessary, extend existing villages." (quoted in Snowden, 1979, p. 34)

This was a typically "post-modern" statement, and clearly a major break with the idea that planning and development should be strategic, large-scale and functionally efficient in managerialist terms. Such an approach was a "straightjacket" which no longer seemed to make sense. Although the council was Labour controlled, the chairperson of its planning committee was an Independent councillor - one of the founders of Durham County Housing Association and its housing manager! However, the District Labour Group was now opposed to Category "D" following local pressure and the unpopularity of a policy which seemed to have achieved very few positive results. The Leader of the Labour Group explained the change of heart as follows:

"It was realised that the provision of services to colliery villages with no raison d'être any longer would be a strain on the County - hence the County Development Plan. The disappearance of the mining industry in these areas was never envisaged, especially without a whimper. But the planners didn't take into account the reluctance of people to move even three miles to better housing. Local resistance wasn't taken account of. The amount of industry expected in the growth centres didn't come about.

The demolition of pre-1919 houses in the villages was encouraged by the local authorities. Remaining houses were given improvement grants. Oakenshaw for example was almost devastated. Many people went to Willington or Spennymoor. But many of the villages were saved. CROVAC set out to rescue the villages, but was mainly active on the south side of the Wear (the Bishop Auckland area). On this side (Crook and Willington area) we had bulldozing and building. Pressure against this came from local councillors. In 1977 I proposed dropping Category "D". The County Council adopted the resolution as the Structure Plan was in preparation. It was decided that limited infill and development could occur within boundaries agreed between District and County. There was a change of mind; twenty-five years of resistance in the villages had to be recognised, as well as the improvement of houses remaining in the villages. The argument was based on people having a choice of where to live." (46; parentheses added)

In October 1977 the Labour-dominated Durham Branch of the Association of District Councils came out against Category "D" and issued the following statement:

"The Association emphasise the desire for a change of heart on the part of the County Council with regard to the settlement policy, and a need for District Councils to have freedom in deciding issues relating to settlements and to housing within them." (quoted in Snowdon, 1979, p. 34)

As described in chapter 2, Durham County Council revised its settlement categorisation policy in 1977. All villages were to be placed in either Category "A" (growth) or "B" (infill and replacement housing within defined limits). Settlement categorisation was finally rejected by the Conservative Secretary of State in December 1979 following the Examination in Public of the County Structure Plan, and planning policy entered its "early post-modern" period in County Durham.

What Snowdon (1979) describes as the "archetypal" Category "D" village of Witton Park had been placed in Category "B" of the County Council's revised settlement policy adopted in November 1977. In March of that year Wear Valley's District Planning Officer stated of the previous Category "D" designation that:

"... while there is no doubt that the policy has physically wrecked the village, there is considerable evidence that the policy has failed to obliterate Witton Park as a community. Examples of this can be seen in the successful Carnival of 1976, and the determination of the recently formed Witton Park Action Committee whose aim is to secure a future for Witton Park as a village. Having already established that there is a confirmed demand for new development in Witton Park into which people will move, it is now a



question of deciding new housing sites for what will virtually be a new village ..." (quoted in Snowden, 1979, p. 34)

Development was not forthcoming. In 1980 the Witton Park Action Committee's main activities were running an environmental improvement project funded by the Manpower Services Commission, which employed 30 people on temporary contracts and low wages, and looking for ways of attracting private development and rehabilitating existing housing. The Action Committee was particularly keen to see new build which it thought would rejuvenate the village and stimulate property values, and had been exploring possibilities with housing associations and the district and county councils (47). Although no longer "condemned to die" by the state, prospects for growth were slim despite cosmetic efforts to spruce up the village, and further decline seemed possible.

Private builders had actively lobbied against Category "D", apparently claiming that "they would build tomorrow" in the threatened villages if planning restrictions were lifted (48). However, following the rejection of settlement categorisation by central government, district councils in the county found themselves unable to build in the villages due to Housing Investment Programme cuts. The only way building could begin was through private development. But, while the state had abandoned the villages in the 1960s, private developers now abandoned many of them in the early 1980s. Private developers did not respond on the scale they had suggested during the opposition to Category "D" and land owned by them often remained undeveloped despite the fact that it was now possible obtain planning permission (49). The recession meant

that the market demand was not there. Private builders were more interested in other sites in the growth centres where demand was concentrated, as the National Federation of Building Trades Employers' statement to the Examination in Public of the county structure plan reveals:

"... some land indicated as being available for development was patently unattractive for housing ... They called for the Plan to be modified to allow additional development at Chester-le-Street, Durham, Sedgfield and Newton Aycliffe, where they said there was strong public demand." (50).

In Oakenshaw, Wear Valley District Council managed to secure an agreement with a private builder to erect new houses on a 5.5 acre site, but payment for the land would be by number of houses sold (51).

Central government's decision to modify the Durham County Structure Plan after the Examination in Public in 1979 was greeted as a victory for those community groups which had been struggling against the county planning strategy by the community newspaper Durham Street Press:

"Durham County Council Planners got one in the eye last month, when the Department of the Environment made several amendments to their grandiose Structure Plan. The changes give local councils, and indirectly ordinary residents, more say over where houses and factories are to be built ... The new policy proposed by the DOE allocates population targets outside of major towns to each district. Where the houses are built is up to the District Council to decide. Which is good news for us mortals, because district and parish councils are easier to influence than the County Council. Who said 'you can't beat County Hall' anyway?" (52)

The argument that the decision gave local people more of a say about the future of their areas should be viewed against the scale of the economic and housing crisis, especially in the West of the county, which district councils and local groups were largely powerless to tackle. For example, Wear Valley District Council's Labour Leader argued that more far-reaching processes were at work in the area that could not be influenced at a local level:

"The councillors, often union people, are the reason why the area has anything much at all. But without industry the area has no future. Textiles came into the region in a big way and then pulled out. There's no industrial rate base, we're just covering essential services. I'm afraid that the Government is giving up areas that were based on heavy industry. They'll be surplus labour again. The Government says people have to move to find jobs. That's got bad implications for housing here." (53)

#### 3.4 The influence of the central state in bringing about local changes

In the 1950s and '60s Labour councils were largely preoccupied with clearing "slums" and building council housing, encouraged and supported by central governments. As described in chapter 2, the end of the 1960s saw a shift at national level away from redevelopment towards the rehabilitation of existing private housing. In County Durham, Bishop Auckland was the first council to shift towards rehabilitation, and clearly community action largely accounted for this change of heart occurring when and how it did. But while the timing of this policy change depended on such contingent factors, the shifting priorities of housing policy nationally had considerable influence on where resources were channelled locally. In other words, the council was able to move

resources into rehabilitation and increasingly unable to continue redevelopment. However, it seems unlikely that this could have occurred with such evident popular support without the nation-wide reaction against mass state housing based on the experience of it in countless localities (see Dunleavy, 1981). Snowdon (1979, pp. 178-179) observes that:

"The present system of improvement grants originated in the 1949 Housing Act, but it was not until 1971 that Bishop Auckland UDC moved, with any effect, toward the concepts of house and area improvement - too much, too late. Nevertheless more than three thousand houses were improved in recognition of the need to preserve a social asset, with Binchester as a prime example of village rehabilitation. Full advantage was taken of the 1974 Housing Act in declaring Eldon Lane/Coundon Grange the first Housing Action Area in Durham County, which provided the opportunity to put into effect the many improvement proposals recommended by Consultants, and so execute an exercise in village preservation. It is ironic that the first Rehabilitation Order made by Bishop Auckland UDC allowing condemned houses to be renovated, was at Witton Park ... Direction altered, belatedly, in the late 1960s after nearly 2,300 houses had been demolished. The newer policy of gradual renewal rather than total clearance was influenced by political change, more enlightened attitudes and the availability of wider powers."

This account only explains part of the story. Snowdon (54) elaborated on the influence of changes in central government housing policy as follows:

"A big influence in shifting the council's attitude towards improvement was the 1969 Act and General Improvement Areas, and the 1971 Housing Act which introduced 75 per cent grants in assisted areas. The council had been preoccupied with new build. Woodhouse Close, with around 1,800 houses, was finished in 1970. The shift really occurred at one meeting when the Chief Environmental Health Officer was given the new title of Housing Improvement Officer and took over from the City Engineer. Then after 1974 houses in clearance areas had to be 'irredeemably unfit' and were less easy to demolish. Since 1974 Wear Valley has spent £5-600,000 per year on

improvement grants. This was cut to £300,000 for 1981/82, and we'll have to apply for more money mid-year."

Increasingly pressure was placed on local councils to save their existing private housing stock. Local people wanted to preserve housing that was "of the past", at least symbolising a "community spirit" that modernism had destroyed but had been so central to working class culture and, at times, ability to resist capitalism. In a time of disorganisation and uncertainty, this policy could encourage people to find refuge and security in the images and values of the past. The crucial policy change was central government's withdrawal of support for redevelopment. This has to be set in the context discussed in chapter 2. The 1980 Housing Act introduced a new system of renovation grants to encourage further the retention of old housing (see chapter 2). The repairs grant was particularly relevant to Wear Valley where some 30 per cent of its stock was built before 1919. But the council did not know what the demand for grants would be, and as a result councillors preferred to allocate money to the council stock. The attitude of Wear Valley, though, was very different to other authorities in County Durham examined in the case studies below, particularly Derwentside. When, for example, residents in Escomb found that their houses were on the council's substandard list, Wear Valley agreed to meet them and encouraged the formation of a residents' association. Agreement to improve was secured and following improvement the houses leapt in value from around £1-2,000 to £20,000. The policy was, in fact, revalorizing housing by subsidising improvements, rather than decommmodifying housing by replacing a private house with a council house. Wear Valley's

officers clearly understood the wind of change that had been blowing for some years as indicated by the following comment by the authority's Environmental Health Officer:

"At public inquiries the Inspector looks for a willingness to improve. It takes very little to sway him in favour of improvement." (55).

Balchin (1985, p. 77) comments that groups such as Shelter doubted whether sufficient resources would be made available by central government to make the new emphasis on rehabilitation work as effectively as had redevelopment in bringing down the rate of official unfitness. There is some evidence to support this in the case of Wear Valley. In the Gurney Valley a five-year Housing Action Area programme secured the improvement of some eighty per cent of the houses. But an extension was refused by the Department of the Environment, leaving twenty per cent of the houses unimproved and in a very bad environment. The council could not afford to implement a General Improvement Area. The county structure plan had identified the Gurney Valley as an Action Area for comprehensive treatment by redevelopment, but Wear Valley's renewal strategy had to be abandoned due to lack of finance in September 1980, with residents claiming that the area was now under "sentence of death" (57). Wear Valley had inherited forty-five General Improvement Areas from the four constituent authorities in 1974. Many were discontinued owing to financial restrictions. By 1981 only six were completed and the rest were nowhere near completion. The situation illustrated the extent to which the private market solution was dependent on public sector support.

It was in the depressed localities that public sector support was crucial to housing investment. In the type of villages referred to in chapter 2, which were favourably placed in a market of attractive village homes for relatively affluent commuters, this was not so important. For instance, while Witton Park struggled for its existence, residents in Heighington, near Darlington, organised to oppose further private development intended by the county structure plan. While Witton Park residents wanted to see growth, Heighington residents wanted growth to end. The population of the parish had almost doubled in thirty years, largely due to an influx of professional workers employed in expanding services in Darlington, Aycliffe and surrounding areas. It was a relatively affluent village, with property values reflecting its pleasant environment and location, and a process of "middle class" community construction was underway.

At the instigation of Community Service for Durham County's Countryside Officer, a committee was formed in 1979 to draw up a Parish Study of Heighington (58). The idea behind this study was that the planning process could be reversed to a bottom-up rather than top-down approach, so that a village plan would feed into the district plan which would feed into county planning (59). The district council planners were keen on the concept. Policy recommendations were developed on the basis of a questionnaire of residents, one major recommendation being that housing development should be restricted to infill. The study was put to a well-attended public meeting. A planning consultant was hired to press the case for no further major housing development. At the Examination in Public of the county structure plan in December 1979, residents

objected to their village being designated as a settlement where development would be allowed (60). As a result of the Secretary of State's statement on the structure plan, the decision on whether to permit development at Heighington was transferred from the County Council to the District Council, with no designations for particular settlements outside the major centres (61). This was a victory, because the residents had earlier won the support of Darlington Borough Council, as well as the local Labour MP (62).

The case is a good example of successful "middle class" community action defending through exclusionary tactics a very desirable environment (see Saunders, 1980a, pp. 237-272; Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 214-222; Barlow and Savage, 1986). More fundamentally, this action did not involve the intense struggles of Category "D" to "save communities" against an "economic logic" which ascribed no value to them, but in fact provided a host of use values essential to working class culture and, indeed, survival (see Harvey, 1987, pp. 14-17). Heighington was about maintaining the "tone" of a "middle class" space; arguably, an environment for reproducing the new "central" workers of post-modern capitalism.

### 3.5 Summary

The above account considers the conflicts that occurred in Durham County villages as a result of settlement categorisation, especially in South West Durham. The County Council sought to utilise land-use and strategic planning as part of a modernisation strategy to attract



capital and reproduce labour power. This was a framework within which district councils' housing policies were expected to fit. The strategy was dependent on expanding local state expenditures enabling the reshaping of the built environment on the basis of assumptions about the positions of different localities within future patterns of accumulation. This was held to be in the interests of the working class people who had to lose their homes and communities and move. Although these processes were separate from the industrial-economic modernisation pursued through central government departments for industry and employment during the post-war period, which are not examined in the present thesis (but see Massey, 1984; Townsend, 1983; Hall, 1986), they have close links with economic modernisation, as their demise paralleled the abandonment of this strategy. Thus, while a "contest of domains" clearly occurred, along a people-officialdom axis, the reason why this happened was connected with processes of uneven development which the state had to manage. One aspect of this was that localities where it was thought there would not be work were run down through state action.

Defensive struggles against the modernisation strategy of the County Council took various forms, including the establishment of action groups, a private housing association and electoral politics. Local pressure was instrumental in leading district councils into opposing spatial restructuring, which councillors saw as not delivering the desired outcomes anyway, and in moderating County Council policy. County policy, however, was only finally reformulated for the "early post-modern era" following central government's refusal to approve its structure plan. As well as this, housing policy was increasingly

"nationalised" to achieve a recommodification of as much of the stock as possible, including retaining old private housing. But no great recovery in the fortunes of Category "D" villages appeared to occur following the abandonment of modernisation, and "private market" solutions in the depressed localities seemed to demand significant public sector support, particularly renovation grants, with only the attractive commuter villages having good prospects. The end of Category "D" was essentially a product of abandoning modernisation, which emerges as a phase in the history of accumulation in County Durham.

The reverse side of the coin to Durham's "condemned villages" was the modern growth centres. The following chapter examines further aspects of the working class experience of modernisation in County Durham by presenting the results of work in two growth centres: Peterlee, a new town, and Bessemer Park, a large housing estate built in an existing Category "A" settlement, Spennymoor.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXPERIENCES OF GROWTH CENTRES IN COUNTY DURHAM

This chapter turns to discuss aspects of the development and experience of two growth centres in County Durham - the new town estates of Peterlee in Easington and the large council estate of Bessemer Park in the Category "A" town of Spennymoor - and examines *community action* in these localities. The working class experience of them was dominated by the history of the rise and fall of "modernisation"; a strategy designed to counter the decline of older industries, but which remained dependent upon the decisions of capital as to where and when to invest. Other areas in the county, principally the new town of Newton Aycliffe, were also areas where this process, with its false promises of transforming the working class experience of capitalism in County Durham, occurred. But, for reasons that appeared to relate to the disablement of community action referred to in chapter 1, such action was not in evidence in Newton Aycliffe when fieldwork was being undertaken during 1980-82 (63). It was not a major aim of the research to discover in detail why action did not occur when it might have been expected (on this, see Kraushaar, 1981). The major aim was to investigate why in some localities it did occur, and whether its origins and nature could be explained with reference to the same type of wider processes constituted in different localities. In other words, the approach of the present thesis is to work towards revealing the necessary generative mechanisms behind community action, rather than what is regarded as the contingent conditions which result in community action occurring in one

locality while not in another, despite similar housing, economic or other problems.

Nonetheless, an attempt was made to investigate why community action was not in evidence in the new town of Newton Aycliffe, which was a depressed "growth centre" in the early 1980s. One reason for doing this was to verify the information given by key informants interviewed at the beginning of the research about where community action was then, or had recently been, occurring (see Appendix 1).

Newton Aycliffe was designated in 1947, a year before Peterlee, on a greenfield site to serve an existing industrial estate built for the war effort. Its public housing was transferred to Sedgefield District Council in 1978, along with serious problems in the modern systems built dwellings, including leaking flat roofs, defective and cracking floors and ageing central heating (64). In the 1950s Newton Aycliffe had a sound economic base and good employment prospects which attracted people to the new town. The Hailsham Report of November 1963 designated the Darlington/Aycliffe area as a "growth centre" with a target population of 45,000 (Bowden, 1970). However during the 1970s industrial closures and unemployment rose dramatically, and in 1979, following the Examination in Public of the Durham County Structure Plan, its population target was revised down to 32,000 for 1991.

In common with other new towns Newton Aycliffe's level of owner-occupation was low - approximately fifteen per cent in 1980. Despite the problems in the

public housing stock, there appeared to have been no organised community action by tenants. The Development Corporation employed two Community Development Officers (CDOs). But, mainly because of the Corporation's difficult relationships with the local district council which considered the new town to be unfairly privileged in regard to recreational facilities and amenities, the CDOs avoided supporting tenant organisation (65). In the early 1980s community associations in the area were solely concerned with recreational and community service activities. The worst new town estates were stigmatised and unpopular, and most people just wanted to get out of them. The situation was reflected by the activities of one community group in Midridge, a commuter village of mostly private housing in the new town area, which was pressing for the status of a Parish Council to distinguish the village from the stigmatised new town.

Both Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee were Mark I new towns designated under the New Towns Act 1946. A third new town was designated in County Durham in 1964 - Washington. Although tenants' associations formed at an early stage in this new town about housing and heating issues (66), Washington was from 1974 part of Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council and was excluded from the present study, which focuses on the areas of spatial restructuring outside the major urban districts of Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside in the case of County Durham, and of the Belfast Urban Area in the case of North Armagh.

An important observation emerges, however, from this brief survey of the County Durham new towns. It is clear that the local state agencies of post-war modernisation in housing and planning in these localities - the new town

corporations - established reputations among tenants as good housing authorities, managing a new housing stock and good facilities in promising economic circumstances and growth conditions nationally (67). This can also be seen from the accounts of Peterlee and Craigavon in chapters 4 and 8. The reason for this is well summed up by one of Washington's Community Development Officers:

"The repairs service under the development corporation was generally good. There was a commitment to stop housing or social problems developing, partly because the corporation was keen to prevent a bad image to industry developing." (68).

In contrast, the local district councils (the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland) which inherited the new town housing stocks during the 1970s were often experienced as bad housing authorities - slow on repairs, lacking commitment to new town estates that were only one part of larger districts and hostile to community groups. These were the authorities that inherited the housing legacy of modernisation: growing repairs problems and depressed housing estates, with much reduced housing and social budgets, and mass unemployment. Increasing vacancies in the most defective and unpopular housing became a major headache, especially when in Spennymoor - but to a much lesser extent in Easington - there was also available both good council housing and older, relatively cheap, private housing built before modernisation, which reflected the bad estates in even worse light. Many tenants could escape to these alternatives.

The void problem reduced resources that could have been used to maintain the rest of the housing stock in the growth centres. The experience of tenants managed by beleaguered landlords was obviously likely to shape popular attitudes to local councils in these areas as impenetrable bureaucracies, for instead of being able to manage growth they were forced to manage decline, a situation imposed on the councils by the effective collapse of the modern branch plant economy amid the continuing decline of the coal industry and the effects of central government policy on state housing. Such a strategy of relegating local government to, in large measure, managing the social proletariat, seems a significant development of "post-modern" times, and was made all the easier by the officialdom-people cleavage which occurred during the years of post-war corporatism in local politics (see chapter 1). A consequence of this "poverty management" appears to have been an absence of any organised community action in many of these depressed localities, and this is remarkable given the nature and scale of problems in these areas. Even in Bessemer Park and Peterlee community action was very weak. Tenants' energies went into attempting to "escape" from the worse housing or were incorporated into the management strategies of the local state. These points are further developed in the case studies of Bessemer Park and Peterlee which follow.

#### 4.1 A new way of life - in Bessemer Park

The reader will by this point not be surprised at the rationale for the construction of the mass housing estate of Bessemer Park. As chapter 3 described, the small village of Binchester was one of the settlements which the

Durham County Housing Association attempted to save from the terminal decline envisaged by the growth centre strategy of the County Council. Bessemer Park was one of the largest of the new modern environments to which people from such villages were planned to be rehoused. As the Pepler-MacFarlane Report (1949, p. 182) stated:

"At Binchester the houses are deplorable ... there is no point in reconstructing them as the population would find much better opportunities for living in an enlarged Spennymoor."

As part of the Durham County Development Plan, Spennymoor was expanded to accommodate people moving away from the declining West of the coalfield to create pools of labour attractive to new industry (Austrin and Beynon, 1979). As in Northern Ireland, state housing schemes were tailored to this strategy (Byrne, 1979). In Spennymoor, once a coal and steel town, this gave birth to Bessemer Park, a large council housing development built on the Bison Wall Frame system, on the site of what had been a steel works, to house labour for the new industry that it was intended to bring into the town. The estate was completed in 1971. It was built at a relatively high density - 23 dwellings to the acre - and consisted of a 560 unit "Spine" development of five storey deck-access flats, heated by electric warm air partial central heating, and a "carpet" of 449 bungalows and houses, heated by gas warm air partial central heating (69). In 1977 it accounted for 1,009 of Spennymoor's 3,360 council dwellings (70). The flats were built using the Bison system of Concrete Ltd., one of the few large firms which dominated the state-created market in mass housing during modernisation with their industrialised systems. In fact, the



Bison system became the market leader in high-rise in 1966, although from 1964 the firm's fastest growing market was in low-rise construction, which was the housing form for Bessemer Park (Dunleavy, 1981, pp. 64-65). In terms of form and location Bessemer Park was a typical product of the "package deals" of the industrialised building boom in which these few large firms' profits played a much greater role than the quality of the product. Industrialised building, especially but not solely high-rise, was promoted as the ideal method for producing modern mass housing, as Dunleavy (1981, pp. 102-103) comments:

"A large part of the appeal of high-rise was based on its claim to newness, to be the product of technical advances ... (T)he legitimacy of these claims (by the construction industry) provided by architectural ideology was an especially important influence in producing acceptance ... There was ... an extremely optimistic ethos about technology in post-war British society, an ethos particularly well developed in the political elite." (parenthesis added)

Spennymoor's experience of economic restructuring appears to be fairly typical of the modern growth centres. Black & Decker, Courtaulds and Thorns expanded subsidiaries in the town during the 1960s, promising a new future for local workers. Courtauld's recruitment literature, for example, stated:

"A GOOD WAGE AND A JOB FOR LIFE. Above all else a job at Courtaulds, Spennymoor, offers you security with an excellent weekly wage and employment consistently throughout the year." (quoted in Ellis and Fahey, 1979, p. 90).

But this investment was short-lived. The factory was employing 1,500 people when, in May 1979, it closed down:

"It was one of the most advanced worsted spinning factories in the world and it had opened just ten years earlier with the assistance of local and national government ... in 1979 the workers were faced with an ultimatum; 'accept a £7 wage cut and 560 redundancies or the plant closes'. At mass meetings the company's 'offer' was rejected out of hand and a campaign was set up to 'stop the axe at Spennymoor'. At the end of the day however, the campaign was defeated. Workers accepted the closure as inevitable, and took their redundancy payments ..." (Ellis and Fahey, 1979, p. 90)

Spennymoor experienced growing unemployment throughout the 1970s as the crisis in Fordist-type mass production intensified. The problem became concentrated in areas like Bessemer Park, built to house labour from Category "D" villages, but now trapping what had become surplus labour in a sink estate. The estate's problems were not just caused by the lack of jobs, but also by serious physical defects which plagued much of this type of construction. Major problems with dampness, the cost of heating and extensive vandalism emerged in the Spine development. In 1977, just six years after the estate had been completed, the Housing Department estimated that three-quarters of its problems - in terms of DHSS Direct Payments, NTQ/Suspended Orders/Court Hearings and rent arrears of £15 to £100 plus - were concentrated in Bessemer Park (specifically, the Spine blocks), despite the estate accounting for only one-third of council properties (71). Mental health problems were a particular concern for community psychiatric nurses. A filtering process concentrated marginalised groups in the estate:

"The trend is for people to want to move off the Bessemer Park Estate to more prosperous council estates elsewhere in the town ... increasingly the flats are housing people of low income; often non regular payers; and weaker members of society, who are less able to cope with the problems of family life and day to day living. In unofficial terms a tenant 'serves

his time' on an upper flat, moves to a ground floor flat, then to a carpet dwelling, and finally off the estate." (72)

The County Council's Community Development Officer Assistant summed up the estate's general situation in an unpublished report of 1977 as follows:

"Bessemer Park is an area of high density population (over 3,000 individuals live within a half square mile area) situated near Spennymoor Town Centre ... it has acquired for itself the reputation of being one of the worst complexes of council housing in Sedgefield District, and in retrospect the Housing Department now concede that in design and conception, the estate was a mistake from the outset ... we are now dealing with an area of high discontent which houses a population largely in transit and has more than its fair share of social, behavioural and emotional problems ... an air of depression, delapidation and decline engulfs the whole place." (73)

It is ironic that this description has many similarities with the Pepler-MacFarlane Report's portrayal of Durham pit villages in 1949. In the same way that the modern environments of the 1950s and 1960s were to replace the old depressed settlements of early industrialisation, these environments of later "branch plant" industrialisation were now depressed areas in a post-modern era as capital restructured. As Harvey (1978, p. 124) observes:

"Under capitalism there is a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time."

Faced with the growing marginalisation of the estate's inhabitants, who had become casualties of this process, the local Labour council agreed to a strategy

which had a large element of social control, using a community development approach implemented by what have been aptly termed "poverty professionals" (see Byrne's (1986) account of the Gateshead-Newcastle Inner City Partnership, which has many parallels with the present case study). The strategy was described by the Community Development Officer Assistant with Durham County Social Services Department as follows:

"The Council acknowledge that it is an estate on the decline but feel that it is not totally beyond saving, provided steps are taken to stabilise the population, improve the appearance of the estate, and redress the major complaints of residents. This is an ideal opportunity for Social Services to work alongside other council departments and a full-time neighbourhood or community worker would make an important and unique contribution to the processes of change and the need for innovation." (74)

Community self-help, supportive group work and preventive community work were recommended. A family advice and guidance centre was proposed, housed in a property on the estate:

"... once the property was acquired, it could serve a dual purpose acting also as a meeting centre for clubs and groups which the workers and the people feel would answer needs in the community, drawing it together and helping to instil a sense of identity and possibly even help build up a feeling of pride that one lived on Bessemer Park ..." (75)

The "Community House" opened on 20 March 1978, with two workers funded by the Manpower Services Commission. Apparently the council stipulated that the property was not to be used for tenants' campaigns (76). There was no encouragement of community action and when an attempt was made in 1982 to organise a tenants' group about the dampness problem it soon collapsed (77).

Similar problems of community organising in "problem estates" were evident in Peterlee and Craigavon (see this chapter and chapter 8), where high tenant turnover militated against organisation, although the individual acts of tenants (arrears, transfer requests, refusals, vandalism, etc.) often had an impact in making the estates too costly to manage and maintain. Dunleavy (1981) also reports that tenant opposition to mass state housing was weak, disorganised and ignored or filtered out by policy-makers.

Another similarity with Craigavon was that some tenants wanted to stay in generally unpopular housing because space standards were good and the location, on the edge of the old town centre, convenient (35 per cent of tenants in the Spine blocks of Bessemer Park were satisfied with the area, 40 per cent of whom gave reasons of dwelling size and location (78)). However, Spennymoor Council set up an Officers Working Party to examine constructional defects and improvements to the flats, which reported in 1978 (79). Serious problems were found with fire safety, dampness and electrical installation. In June 1980 the council accepted an out-of-court settlement of £120,000 from the contractors, Concrete (Northern) Ltd., for alleged design faults at Bessemer Park (80). It was accepted behind closed doors with an agreement that the amount of the settlement should not be made public.

It was not until 1982 that proposals for the estate were published in a further report by the Chief Executive to the Special Housing Committee (81). This considered three options: refurbishment; partial demolition and refurbishment; demolition; demolition and redevelopment. The last option was:

"A radical (and costly!) alternative but the one most likely to achieve a satisfactory development." (82)

It was pointed out that by 1983/84 the council was likely to be out of housing subsidy, so that the cost of any solution would fall on rents and/or rates. The large central government subsidies of the modernisation era were a thing of the past, and the local authority was left to deal with the problem largely from within its own limited resources. An increasing problem, which ultimately determined which solution the council adopted, was the number of voids appearing in Bessemer Park as people found housing elsewhere, either in council houses or in older private housing which in Spennymoor had not been destroyed on the scale that occurred in the Category "D" villages.

In April 1982 it decided to demolish the flats, displacing almost 1,000 tenants, and to build about 200 traditional houses - a cheaper solution than attempting repairs (83). However the first phase of rehousing was to be to vacancies in the existing council stock, many of which were in unpopular, inconvenient areas (84). The exercise was essentially a rationalisation designed to reduce costs to the local council of a difficult-to-let estate, rather than, as in the "modernisation era", to present the (illusionary) prospect of a better future for the mass of people living in "slums". Efforts to organise community self-help to "save" Bessemer Park were unsuccessful, most tenants just wanting to get out of the estate, and although tenant campaigns were virtually non-existent, the estate was eventually demolished to

eliminate its drain on management and maintenance resources as voids and "social problems" mounted.

#### 4.2 Farewell Squalor?: the case of Peterlee

The next five sections of the present chapter are a case study of the new town growth centre of Peterlee in the District of Easington. The working class experience of modernisation is well-illustrated by this particular case, which shows the sub-regional impact of a "growth centre", as well as the pattern of its development during the "modernisation era" and subsequent decline at the end of the era. While the housing problems of Bessemer Park could eventually be resolved by demolishing this "modern housing form", largely because housing was available in the traditional stock as a result of both a history of traditional council housebuilding and a remaining stock of older private housing, in Easington the situation was rather different. Housing policy in Easington District was dominated during the post-war period by the needs and strategy of Peterlee Development Corporation. Much of the traditional terraced housing in the area was demolished, and much of the Corporation's new build was industrialised mass construction concentrated in the new town. This stock, which the local council later inherited from the Development Corporation, had a high percentage of defective housing, but people had to live in it because of a lack of alternatives. The council could not consider demolition on any major scale. This situation had much to do with the fact that Spennymoor was a "growth centre" which failed to "take off", leading to a degree of over-provision of housing (an acute problem in Craigavon; see chapter

8). Except for a period during the late 1950s/early 1960s Easington's local economy was more stable until the recession of the 1970s, and housing opportunities were largely restricted to what the new town had to offer.

Peterlee was designated on 10 March 1948 in the local authority area of Easington Rural District Council. It was in origin an outcome of a proposal by the local council which was accommodated within the Mark I new towns programme of the first post-war Labour Government.

The Labour Party took control of Easington Rural District Council after the First World War and the authority, like other Labour councils in the county, pursued an active housing policy during the inter-war period (Robinson, 1983, p. 265). After the Second World War the council, responding to the Ministry of Health's request in 1943 for local authorities to review post-war housing needs, decided the best way forward would be to concentrate new development in one urban area. The person behind the decision, which developed into the objective of a new town for miners and their families, was the council's "modernising" Engineer and Surveyor, C.W. Clarke. His proposals were published by the council in 1947 as the pamphlet Farewell Squalor (Clarke, 1947).

Clarke was moved by the appalling housing conditions in the area.

Patton (1978, p. 224) reports the results of a 10 per cent sample survey of housing conditions in the villages of Easington carried out in 1948 which showed 30 per cent of houses to have no separate kitchen, 46 per cent to have no fitted bath, 75 per cent to have no indoor lavatory and



33 per cent to be overcrowded on the criterion of one room per person. Given this situation, the tone of Farewell Squalor is indignant and paints a picture of inhuman living conditions in the pit villages. Clarke (1947) intended that Peterlee should meet all of Easington RDC's housing needs, including new households and slum clearance, and this aim was reflected in the Designation Order.

At the Public Inquiry into the Order, *objections included* representations from Haswell, Hutton Henry and Thornley Parish Councils, Thornley Miners' Lodge and the Labour Party in Haswell and South Hetton (Patton, 1978, p. 230). Their arguments concerned the difficulties of having to travel to the pits by bus from Peterlee and opposition to the curtailment of new housing and facilities in the existing villages. As described in chapters 2 and 3, the centralisation of investment was a key part of Durham County Council's planning strategy as set out in its 1951 County Development Plan. The Plan's policy of settlement categorisation graded settlements A, B, C or D according to their role in the regional economy and therefore their likely growth and viability. In the case of Easington Rural District, the Plan states:

"Future development in this district will largely be conditioned by the erection of a new town at Peterlee, which will draw population from all the mining communities in the district ... These are all predominantly communities containing a considerable amount of low standard property and lacking many social facilities ... The population of Peterlee will increase as building proceeds and people move from the surrounding villages (Durham County Council, 1951, pp. 90-91).

Fourteen pit villages surrounding the new town were designated Category "C", with a further ten villages primarily based on agricultural employment which it was considered would remain stable designated Category "B". However the district council, Easington RDC, was less enthusiastic about settlement categorisation. It had pursued a crash post-war housing programme without hindrance from any superordinate state body, but from 1951 Durham County Council attempted to restrict severely housebuilding in Easington's villages. This brought the County Council into conflict with Easington RDC, as well as other district councils affected by the settlement policy, which continued to build in the villages. The County Planning Department warned Easington RDC that its housebuilding - actually supported by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government as part of Macmillan's housing drive (the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the promoter of new towns, had been disbanded by the first post-war Conservative Government) - was threatening the achievement of Peterlee's 30,000 population target (Leishman, 1971, pp. 109-141). The County Planning Department also argued that new industry and in-migration from outside the Rural District would be necessary to reach the new town's target of 30,000, an argument that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was later to support and which for them ruled out new development in the villages. Easington RDC continued to argue for more development in the surrounding villages than the target of 30,000 for the new town allowed for, under pressure from an active parish council lobby and press publicity. But its position became untenable when the coal mining industry began to contract in the early 1950s, as Leishman (1971, p. 134) comments:

"If there was anything to argue in favour of a new town in Easington RD, and many arguments to this point in time had been spurious to a degree, it was that the whole economic basis on which the villages existed, coal mining employment, was beginning to disappear. With the NCB's plans for closure and contraction in the coal industry ... it was now beyond a doubt that Peterlee's goal would be that of an industrial as well as a residential focal point for the area. The RDC's championship of the villages, as the points of growth, whether it appreciated this or not, was now a lost cause, and its virulent opposition began to wane."

Following the Public Inquiry into the Easington Town Map in September 1960, the Minister upheld the original intention that none of the existing villages should expand, although the amount of replacement housing in ten of them was increased slightly "on grounds of hardship" (Leishman, 1971, p. 135).

The Labour councillors on Easington RDC saw the new town as a way of continuing their inter-war and early post-war drives to improve the standard of working class housing, but this time control of the process was to be with central government and this meant that the villages which were to bear the costs of the policy had little way of influencing the planning process. Under the Attlee administration, power was concentrated at the centre in a strong national state through which the goal of an effectively and rationally managed national capitalist economy was sought (Miliband, 1969, pp. 98-106; Merrett, 1979, pp. 235-236). This was expressed very strongly in the 1946 New Towns Act, under which new towns were to be designated by the Minister of Town and Country Planning on the single policy criterion that designation would be "expedient in the national interest". They were to be developed and managed by development corporations appointed by and responsible to the

Minister. Local government had only a consultative role. As Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, p. 223) comment:

"The principal reason for the power and autonomy of the development corporation was that it was seen by central government as the most suitable institutional means for implementing new town policy. If only by implication, the view was that the great economic and social experiment would succeed only if it were distanced from existing forms of local state institutions and from the possibly detrimental influence of local social relations."

Peterlee's development was a source of conflict between different state agencies (Leishman, 1971, pp. 109-141). It appears that in agreeing to Peterlee's designation under the New Towns Act, Easington RDC did not realise the degree to which it would lose control of the project (Patton, 1978; Robinson, 1983); a situation very similar to district councils' lack of understanding of the local consequences of Durham County Council's spatial restructuring strategy, and further evidence of the experience of modernisation as imposed at local level (see chapter 3). The Labour Minister, Lewis Silkin, appointed only one Easington councillor and one other local person to the eight-member board of Peterlee Development Corporation. The board continued to be dominated by non-local appointees during the 1950s, again a similar situation to other corporatist modernisation bodies such as Craigavon Development Commission and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. This, and other issues such as the board's secretiveness, meant that relations with the local council remained poor until the 1970s. In addition, delays in construction due to the new town's location in an area of subsidence, and the unpopularity of the Corporation's chairperson, led to hostility

towards the Development Corporation from local people, who had no direct means of electorally or politically influencing the board.

The approach of the Development Corporation exemplifies the modernist ideology which accompanied the imposition of spatial restructuring. Robinson (1983, p. 270) states that although the Corporation chairperson was progressive in her outlook, she tended to argue the case for Peterlee by disparaging the villages, and the fact that she was a woman did not go down well in a male-dominated working class political culture. He quotes a confidential report by the Development Corporation which refers to the "male solidarity that now opposes the introduction of new ideas and ways into the area" (p. 277). She persuaded the prominent and idealistic architect, Berthold Lubetkin, to join the Corporation and lead the design of the new town (85). Although Lubetkin saw himself as a socialist, he had little regard for working class culture in the pit villages, writing of "the aridity of the social life" and that there was "little social and less cultural provision in the coalfield. There were no facilities for higher education and none for social advancement. The villages were isolated from the main currents of contemporary life - backwaters of traditional habits and prejudices" (quoted in Patton, 1978, p. 221). Further conflict ensued when Lubetkin clashed with the National Coal Board and the Attlee Government over his designs for terraced housing and Bath-like crescents leading to a high-rise town centre, which would have sterilised millions of tons of coal (Robinson, 1983; (86)). Lubetkin resigned in 1950 and consultants (Grenfell Baines) were brought in to draft a new Master Plan which would

accommodate mining activities. The first tenants eventually moved in to the new town in February 1951.

The protests from the pit communities in Easington Rural District against enforced decline as a consequence of the Peterlee development were successful in achieving some replacement housing in many of the villages that had been faced with a decimating scale of slum clearance. The community action succeeded in winning over Easington RDC to the villages' case, although those villages closest to the new town did go into decline (Robinson, 1983). However, housing shortages in the villages forced new households, especially newly married couples, to move to Peterlee. Rents were much higher in the new town than in the pit villages, and consequently the turnover of tenants was high. The progressive attitude of the Development Corporation about providing opportunities for women to take up paid employment outside the home was partly so that families could afford the high rents (Robinson, 1975).

#### 4.3 Peterlee: from miners' town to global outpost

Peterlee is an example of how local working class aspirations for social reform were accommodated by central government in a programme of spatial restructuring to accelerate accumulation. The new town was established to rehouse miners from the pit villages of the eastern part of County Durham. As noted above, the idea behind it was to concentrate the post-war housing programme into one urban area in Easington Rural District, rather than having development scattered in the small pit villages which were not attractive to new industry and where reproductive costs would

be high. However, the National Coal Board's needs dominated Peterlee's objectives in the same way that transnationals dominated other growth centres.

The Pepler-MacFarlane Report (1949) specifically warned against introducing new industries which would compete with mining for male labour and attract men away from the pits at a time when coal production was vital to the economy. In addition, the Board of Trade did not want Peterlee to create labour shortages in other areas by drawing labour away from them (Leishman, 1971, pp. 60-65). Some provision for new firms was made, especially to exploit the reserve army of female labour in the area, but this was part of the expression of national regional policy in the North East, which was not very strong in the 1950s (regional policy had to be strengthened when sharp rises in unemployment rates in the older industrial regions occurred at the end of the decade, reflecting the start of the contraction of capital accumulation in their basic industries (Rees and Lambert, 1985, pp. 49-57); see also chapter 2). The massive scale of rationalisations and closures of high-cost collieries by the National Coal Board from the late 1950s had not been anticipated when Peterlee was designated. New employment provision had not been encouraged, leaving the new town largely with only a collapsing single industry as its economic base.

As a result, Hailsham's 1963 White Paper on economic development in the North East (Board of Trade, 1963) saw a new role for Peterlee as a regional growth point in a Tyne-Tees growth zone. However it now had to compete with Washington new town which was designated as part of the new

regional strategy. Despite the provision of more industrial land, improved communications, large-scale factory building and promotional campaigns (which included the appointment of T. Dan Smith's publicity company for this purpose, with Smith himself chairperson of the Peterlee Development Corporation from 1968 to 1970), unemployment continued to grow. Thus, Peterlee moved from being a means of improving local housing conditions for workers in a single dominant industry to, belatedly, a regional growth point in a competitive restructuring process. This shift in the objectives of the new town, although particularly dramatic in the case of Peterlee, occurred generally in the British new towns. Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, p. 223) comment in relation to the new towns programme:

" ... the 1950s was a period when material objectives rapidly transcended the more nebulous and idealist social ones dominant immediately after the war."

Although the new towns were instruments of the 1945 Labour Government's radical reformist approach to urban development (with, for example, the 1946 New Towns Act being the only UK legislation to have succeeded in collecting betterment), in 1951 the newly elected Conservative Government decided that while existing new towns would be completed, in future urban growth would be accommodated through voluntary agreements between local authorities to expand existing towns within the framework of the 1952 Town Development Act (Hall, 1980, p. 162). But the unplanned growth of population during the 1950s forced an about-turn, and in 1961 another Conservative Government began a second phase of new town designations. However, the new towns programme was finally



abandoned in the 1970s. In 1977 Labour Environment Minister Peter Shore began to wind up new town investment, switching public spending to the inner cities (Potter, 1985; see also chapter 2).

The Conservative Government elected in 1979 decided to retain the Scottish new town development corporations and to prolong the life of the development corporations for the new towns in the North East (to 1988 in the case of Peterlee), but this was to use the corporations as agents of early post-modern policies in housing and planning. Central government was much more favourably inclined towards these local state planning bodies, which in fact were very similar to the powerful Urban Development Corporations set up under the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act, than elected local government (Grant and Healey, 1985). The development corporations were given the new job of selling off their assets (Town and Country Planning Association, 1983).

The unprofitable public housing stock had been transferred from the development corporations to the local councils under the New Towns (Amendment) Act 1976. In fact, the stock was often more than unprofitable - for a number of councils it was a very costly liability with which they had been saddled. It was the local councils which bore these costs of the failure of modernisation, not the large corporations which had benefitted from this accumulation phase. In 1982 local authorities in Britain claimed that they faced a £96m repair bill as a result of central government transferring to them housing in the first generation new towns (Town and Country Planning Association, 1983). While the local authorities argued that central government should meet

most of this bill, central government estimated the repairs at £21m and limited its support to 40 per cent of this. Easington District Council alone estimated its repair bill for the new town stock transferred to it from Peterlee Development Corporation to total £37m, but central government offered to meet no more than £5m of repair costs. This became a prominent issue in local politics, as discussed below.

In the mid-1960s Peterlee contributed to a housing surplus in South East Durham, but by the late 1970s there was a housing shortage in the area. The new town's impact on the villages was very great, both in terms of forcing some of them to decline and in leaving them with an ageing population as younger members moved out to find housing. With little private housing, they were reliant on state housing. Robinson (1983, p. 273) makes a similar conclusion to that of the previous chapter with regard to the Category "D" villages of South West Durham:

"With Peterlee approaching its target population, and with the decision to transfer Corporation housing to the local authority following the creation of the new Easington District, housing policy was relaxed in the mid-1970s and, at last, substantial redevelopment of the villages became possible. But the villages had clearly suffered years of neglect to ensure Peterlee's growth, contrary to the assurances of Clarke and Silkin. In some cases the change in policy may have come too late to bring about a complete revival; some of the more blighted villages have lost many of their shops and services, and these are unlikely to be regained" (p. 273).

Peterlee did not reach its population target of 30,000 until the end of the 1970s. Development was slowed down by the need to phase the programme with mining, by problems with the Development Corporation's

private building contractors and by the stultification of industrial growth.

Peterlee's early housing phases were built to traditional designs, but in the late 1950s the Development Corporation engaged the modern artist Victor Passmore "to provide a new housing 'aesthetic'" and "put Peterlee 'on the map'" (Robinson, 1983, p. 271). Industrialised construction was adopted in the 1960s to great cost, as recounted by one of the new town's long-standing tenant activists, whom it is worth quoting at length:

"The first houses in Peterlee were built of old-fashioned red clay bricks. By the standards of the late forties they were good houses and to anyone living in a colliery house they were a dream come true. They look a bit shabby now and in need of repair but they don't have design faults.

Then industrialised houses became fashionable and were deemed by the Ministry of Housing to be just the thing for New Towns. Peterlee Development Corporation built whole estates of pre-fabricated, flat roofed, concrete houses. They were cheaper than traditional houses, quicker to build, and filled with all modern amenities. However, they had one problem. They were riddled with design faults. Pools of water collected on the flat roofs, and in many houses water poured through the windows whenever it rained. These together with heating problems meant many houses suffered from severe damp.

A further cross Peterlee had to bear was the appointment of Victor Passmore as artistic adviser. He conceived the idea of using black bricks on some estates to symbolise the darkness of the past and white bricks on others to symbolise the bright sunlit future that awaited us. Unfortunately the bricks were made of sand and lime and were not suitable for the sea air.

Trouble first began in Sunny Blunts where tenants had to be moved out of their homes while extensive rebuilding took place.

Now Peterlee is fast becoming derelict, Easington Council who took over the houses four years ago have a mammoth task ahead. Flat roofs have to be replaced with low pitched aluminium roofs which improves the appearance of the houses if nothing else. The pebble dash facing that fell off during a very severe winter has never been replaced and some houses are in a dangerous condition.

The residents of Matterdale and Braithwaite estates have been moved out of their houses for structural repairs and the tenants of Westmoreland Rise are about to suffer the same fate. On all three estates the roof tiles have become porous, the foundations are slipping and have to be stitched. The windows are to be replaced and in some houses a new damp course is to be inserted. Finally the symbolic white bricks are to have a protective coat of paint.

Brandling Court in the Town Centre has to be put up for sale as a single entity. If there are no buyers it will have to come down. So if you know of a fool who is anxious to be parted from his money send him along. Easington Council will be delighted to meet him." (87).

Peterlee was part of a modernisation strategy which broke up the "backward" solidaristic relations of the pit villages and displaced much of their populations to mass state housing labour pools. On a wider scale, as discussed in chapter 2, this strategy had the effect of undermining the organisation of the working class at grassroots level in communities and trade unions. In line with the general social ethos of the post-war new towns, Silkin saw one of the purposes of Peterlee to be to introduce a "social mix" into the area to encourage "class harmony". Despite the 1952 Master Plan's use of the concept of neighbourhood units (Peterlee Development Corporation, 1952), communities failed to emerge with the high turnover of tenants, the increasing penetration of televisions, the lack of local social facilities, especially for youths and young families who often continued their social life in the villages from which they had moved, and Easington Council's neglect of the area (Robinson, 1983). The new town's role moved from being a modern re-housing focus for miners and their families in the villages to a growth centre in the central state's regional strategy for renewing conditions for capitalist accumulation in the North East, drawing in labour

displaced by industrial decline and redevelopment from both the local area and the region.

#### 4.4 Peterlee: a new town in decline

From the mid-1970s most of the UK's new towns started to encounter difficulty in attracting new industry (Town and Country Planning Association, 1983). In 1980 the effects of plant closures and the Conservative Government's housing policies on Peterlee, with its large state housing sector which accommodated an increasingly redundant labour pool, were causing serious problems.

In common with other growth centres in the North East, Peterlee's employment base in the 1960s became dominated by transnationals, mostly British and American firms, as the region's traditional industries declined (Austrin and Beynon, 1979). Among the large firms that expanded subsidiaries in Peterlee were Associated Biscuits, Clix Fastners (IMI), IBM and Tudor Foods, all based on Fordist patterns of production. In the mid-1970s factory closures led to escalating unemployment in the North East generally, affecting both old-established firms and the companies which had moved into the area under the planning policies of the 1960s.

Table 4.1 shows the growth of unemployment in the new town, rising by 72 per cent between 1971 and 1981, and much more sharply for women which many of the new industries predominantly employed. This compares with percentage increases of 91 per cent in the North Region as a whole, and

88 per cent in Great Britain. Peterlee had a higher rate of unemployment in 1981 than both the region and the British average, but the rate of increase over the previous decade was not as high, and the new town's unemployment rate was lower than other Employment Exchange Areas in Easington District. However, clearly the new town was badly affected by deindustrialisation despite its growth centre status.

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Table 4.1: PERCENTAGES OF PETERLEE'S ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION OUT OF WORK, WITH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPARISONS, 1971-1981

	Peterlee			North Region			Great Britain		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1971	10.4	6.0	8.9	7.8	5.3	6.9	5.4	4.9	5.2
1981	17.7	11.5	15.3	15.8	9.0	13.2	11.3	7.4	9.8

Sources: see note 88.

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The early 1980s saw a series of manufacturing closures in Peterlee. In June and July of 1982, 295 redundancies were announced by DJB Engineering Ltd., Cummins Engine Co. Ltd. and Optilon Ltd., representing a six per cent loss of industrial jobs in Peterlee over just two months (89). Unemployment in the new town then stood at over 3,000.

Peterlee illustrates very well the growth centre policy of the state creating conditions for accumulation without interfering in the accumulation process itself. For example, a glossy brochure published by Peterlee Development Corporation in 1975 highlighted the pool of labour available in the new town:

"Adaptable labour - male and female - is waiting to go to work for you. East Durham has an unemployment rate twice the national average and 8,000 jobs are required in Peterlee by 1985.

Much of the labour available is semi-skilled, but the record of the North Easterner in acquiring the modern skills needed in today's high technology industry proves they are ready and able to retrain." (90).

However, by 1981 only 5,005 jobs had been created in Peterlee since the 1952 Master Plan, despite the Master Plan's target of 8,000 jobs by 1971. Most of the 250,000 square metres of industrial floorspace provided by the Development Corporation was unused. Despite this failure, the Corporation continued to stress the new town's "attractions" with, for example, its chairperson claiming that:

"Among our advantages is a resourceful and versatile workforce ... Industrial relations are excellent ... the men and women of Peterlee have a record of productivity second to none ... shiftwork presents no problem ..." (91)

Peterlee Development Corporation's efforts to attract industry included representations to central government about including the new town in a second round of enterprise zones.

New towns had been built on the assumption that the national economy would expand and new infrastructure would be necessary to accommodate accumulation. But many sectors experienced a problem of over-accumulation from the late 1960s, and restructuring during the 1970s saw large-scale job-shedding. It became increasingly clear that there had been an over-investment in housing provision in new towns located in peripheral regions that were now hardly growing or actually declining,

causing voids in the state housing stock to develop on a large scale in some areas (as in Craigavon) where there were not housing shortages, a problem aggravated by unpopular housing forms that were difficult-to-let. Many of the estates in the peripheral new towns thus came to accommodate a growing stagnant reserve army of labour that could not find housing anywhere else, rather than a central working class as had been anticipated when the new towns were planned (Byrne and Parson, 1983).

In common with other new towns, Peterlee's housing stock was dominated by state housing. Such an "imbalance" was thought to add to the instability of the area and during the 1970s a growing owner-occupied sector was encouraged by the council partly to reduce the scale of its "management problem" (see section 4.5 below). This is illustrated by Table 4.2.

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Table 4.2: PERCENTAGES OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS IN PETERLEE IN THE THREE MAIN HOUSING TENURES, WITH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPARISONS, 1971-1981.

	Owner Occupied		Rented from Council or New Town		Rented from Private Landlord or Housing Assoc.	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
Peterlee	4	14	94	85	2	1
North Region	42	45	39	40	19	12
Britain	51	56	28	31	21	13

Sources: see note 92.

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The population of Easington District had been declining rapidly since the 1960s, and fell from over 109,000 in 1971 to 101,800 in 1981 (93). This decline was concentrated in the old pit villages, and Peterlee itself grew by 4 per cent between 1971 and 1981. The number of households, however, increased in the district as a whole. This was largely due to Easington's ageing population, which meant growing pressure for special needs housing and health care, especially for an old mining population, yet central government policies were severely restricting expenditure on relevant provision (94). Easington District faced a serious unemployment situation, especially with the continuing decline of the mining industry. In 1982 the number of jobs in the District was below the level of 1951, and there was little prospect of growth in any sector (95).

#### 4.5 The working class pays for Peterlee: rent increases and remedial works.

The vast majority of Easington's unfit old private housing stock had been replaced shortly after local government reorganisation in 1974 as a result of post-war modernisation. However, by the late 1970s a major problem confronting the local council had become the deterioration of its existing, increasingly residualised, modern state housing. Much of this stock, especially in Peterlee, had a question mark over its future if central government cuts continued.

Peterlee's state housing was transferred from the Development Corporation to Easington District Council in 1978 following the New

Towns (Amendment) Act. One councillor was expelled from the Labour Party for resisting the transfer. The massive repair bill that was came with the stock put pressure on the rents. In November 1980 Easington increased the rents of its 18,000 properties by 42.5 per cent (96). The council argued that the rise was necessary to service a £1.3 million debt on the Housing Revenue Account, brought about by Conservative Government policy to end general subsidies and transfer more of the cost of housing to individual consumers. The decision sparked off an angry reaction from the tenants. The Easington District Housing Action Campaign (EDHAC) was set up following a public meeting about the rent increase and with involvement from the North East Tenants' Organisation (NETO) (97). The Action Committee argued that the rise was unnecessarily high, and that the financial burden of the debt should be spread across council tenants, owner-occupiers and industrialists so that the rise would be more in line with inflation. A spokesperson for the Action Committee, following a public meeting about the rent increase at which the tenants felt the councillors present could not explain why such a large increase was being implemented, stated:

"Although the area is solid Labour, and will continue to be, we feel that the Labour Council has let working people down. We would have expected the local Councillors to resist the increase and rally people against the Government.

By their complacency they have jeopardised their stronghold on the Council - people will not be so ready to support Labour, but vote for independents or the Liberals next time. However, I hope Labour Councillors realise they must start to resist this Government and the cuts, to get people behind them." (98)

Due substantially to the housing issue and reaction to the Labour establishment on Easington District Council, Liberals and Independents took control of (the largely powerless) Peterlee Town Council on a protest vote, but there was little threat to Labour's position in the larger District Council. Furthermore, sustained protest failed to emerge about the rent increases despite their scale, which is illustrated by the following figures for the rent of a 3 bedroom council house in the new town (99):

February 1980 .....	£12.50 per week
November 1980 .....	£17.00 per week
April 1981 .....	£22.50 per week
November 1981 .....	£25.00 per week

The increases were only partly absorbed by benefit or wage rises and increasing tenant debts resulted. On 23 February 1981 rent arrears totalled £126,840 (100). Fifteen distress warrants had been issued in Peterlee and a further ten were due to be issued in other areas. Goods had been seized on three occasions.

At a public meeting on 3 April 1981 members of the Action Committee decided to withhold the £2 a week rent rise due to begin the following week in an effort to mobilise protests (101). They also decided to picket the local rent office, and promised to put up candidates for the next council election, arguing that the council was not representing the tenants. The meeting was not well attended, although initially the campaigns and demonstrations organised as a result of it were well supported. About a hundred tenants withheld the rent increase and

picketed the rent office to get the support of other tenants but, according to one of the activists, there was no effective organisation and the protest petered out (102). A small group of five tenants continued with the Action Committee, although the focus of activity shifted to organising social events. Further public meetings were very badly attended and the protests collapsed.

The Action Committee received no support from either the Development Corporation's Social Development Office or local authority community workers. It carried out widespread leafletting to try and keep up local interest, but the group collapsed by the summer of 1981. One of its initiators considered that a reason for the failure to maintain tenants' involvement in the action was that there was not enough community work input, and clearly there were few resources to support tenant organisation (103).

While action on the rent issue was short-lived and attracted little support, problems connected with remedial works to Peterlee's defective housing stock in the early 1980s resulted in more success, largely because of the scale of protest about the physical disruptions involved and the fact that the council needed the co-operation of the tenants in its attempts to safeguard its housing stock. Design faults, structural defects and subsidence were seriously affecting much of its housing. Conflict with tenants developed about the council's organisation of the remedial programme which was started to tackle these problems, including lack of consultation, claims about the poor standard of work and materials used, and the costs of internal re-decoration.

There was a variety of problems as the following examples show. During work to replace flat roofs in one area, rain penetration caused extensive damage to carpets, wallpaper, clothing and furniture. Old people faced considerable disruption. The tenants called in the local Labour MP and threatened legal action against the council in an attempt to obtain compensation (104). A twelve year old "executive housing" development was found to be built on sinking sand. People began to refuse to move in, and as voids built up, vandalism developed and other tenants moved out. The council unsuccessfully attempted to avoid demolition by offering the estate for less than £30,000 to private developers and then to a local church. Over £170,000 was outstanding in debt charges on the estate, and it was eventually demolished. Some houses stood for many months boarded up. Major remedial works could take over 1½ years and some improvements, such as heating systems which were a common source of complaints, were not included (105). These costs - remedial works, cheap sales, voids and demolition - were major contributions to the council's debt which, under the new housing subsidy system introduced in 1980, forced it to make its tenants pay for mistakes made by the Development Corporation. The 1981/82 HIP allocation to Easington, which included provision for remedial works in Peterlee, was 70 per cent less than the amount requested, and less than the allocation received for 1980/81 (106).

A public meeting about major works to 117 dwellings in the Acre Rigg IV area of Peterlee was held by the council on 12 March 1981, but "the results were not entirely satisfactory for the Council or the tenants involved" (107). In view of what it regarded as disruption by a small

group of activists, the council decided not to hold any further public meetings and to manage tenant participation instead through information brochures and an on-site information caravan, which was in fact poorly used and withdrawn. However an action committee organised a further public meeting on 30 April 1981 (108). Some of the tenants had been temporarily rehoused in caravans in poor conditions and with only very basic facilities. Many tenants were anxious about when they would be rehoused and the cost of internal redecoration. There was general concern and lack of knowledge about tenants' rights. One of the most active local tenants proposed organising a deputation to the council demanding a grant for redecoration and better facilities in the caravans.

Tenant agitation was successful in speeding up the council's programming of its work, and the Housing Department included "tenants' aggravation" in deciding on priorities (109). But by June 1981 tenants were still demanding a meeting with the council to discuss the improvement programme, which it now emerged would last for three years. One of the tenants, a long-standing trade unionist and socialist, was considering standing against the Labour Party in the council elections the following May as an Independent. In the event someone else stood, who had organised action on the design faults, and was elected as an Independent member. By August 1982 the housing improvements were well underway. However, dissatisfaction developed with the standard of work undertaken by the Council's Direct Labour Organisation (which had submitted the lowest tenders) and tenants were apparently pleased that two contracts had recently been awarded to large private building companies (110).

Damage to furniture and other belongings caused by rain penetration during the improvement works led to successful claims against the council. Tenants were also successful in securing redecoration grants despite the council's initial opposition (111).

#### 4.5 Easington District Council: managing the cuts

Robinson (1983, p. 280) makes the point that Peterlee Development Corporation was not accountable to the local electorate. Not only did the local council criticise this situation, but so also did some of the Corporation's own staff. A highly critical report by two of its researchers was published in the mid-1970s quoting the results of a Durham University survey which revealed that all was not well in the new town's housing estates:

"29% of respondents considered heating to be bad; 23% considered house design to be bad; 33% considered the quality to be bad, and 30% considered the privacy to be bad ... Failings are evident in the location and management of facilities within the town ..." (112)

The report went on to state that the Development Corporation had no strategy, made little effort to attract industry, failed to collect information about the town's needs and problems, operated very restrictive housing management practices, lacked any sympathy for the villages and was divorced and distant from the local community. It stated:

"People feel they have no means of influencing the Corporation; the Durham University survey found that 87% of respondents felt unable to influence its decisions. It had no established channels of

contact with the town ... and our interviews revealed the existence of deep frustration in people's efforts to get through to the Corporation." (113)

The authors claimed that "the exercise was to win more land and more life for the Corporation", a similar conclusion to that reached by Bob Mullan in his study of Stevenage new town (Mullan, 1980). Mullan describes the "symbiotic relationship" between industry, especially the British Aircraft Corporation, and the Development Corporation:

"... although it is clearly evident that the Corporation wanted an extension of its own 'life', this was made possible by the industrialists urging for more housing (for the future) and therefore land, together with an industrial structure which effectively reduced the Corporation to a position of handmaiden" (p. 259)

Mullan illustrates the congruence of interests that existed between capital and the new town development corporation which, given the limits on state intervention in a capitalist economy, was inevitable. Even Easington Council recognised this when, in 1982, it opposed the decision to wind up Peterlee Development Corporation in 1985 (later extended to 1988). This, it argued, would deprive the area of a crucial industrial promotion body (114).

The dimensions of the housing problems confronting Easington in the early 1980s were set out in its HIP submissions (115). The 1981 Housing Strategy Statement formed the strategy basis of its bids, and clearly identified the new post-modernisation climate facing the council:



"The past year has been characterised by fundamental and far reaching changes in national housing and fiscal policy which have affected the Housing Investment Programme and the Council's ability to implement policies and programmes." (116)

In common with other housing authorities in England and Wales, Easington suffered a large cutback in its 1981/82 housing capital allocation (14 per cent). This was a particularly daunting cut for the council in view of the 6,500 houses built by the Development Corporation in Peterlee which it estimated needed a massive £45m to rectify structural and design faults. Only £1.7 million was allocated by the Department of the Environment Regional Controller to this remedial work in 1981/82. Overall, the council estimated in 1981 that 49 per cent of its own stock and 27 per cent of private sector stock needed improvement or renovation work. Cutbacks meant that capitalised repairs to the council stock were now restricted to matters where safety and the authority's statutory obligations were involved (except, significantly, for expenditure on Improvement for Sale). All assistance to the North Housing Association, with which Easington's relations had not been particularly good, was curtailed following it becoming a registered housing association. With the council's money for new build drastically reduced, there was some hope that Housing Corporation funding would help meet needs for new build. The council's role as a housing authority was being undermined - a feature of post-modern housing policy which was to become clearer with subsequent legislation in the 1980s.

Easington District Council was essentially a conservative housing authority, with members tending to adopt a management rather than policy

approach to housing, and leaving policy initiatives (such as taking up the central government's Improvement for Sale scheme) to officers (117). It had been promoting scattered sites throughout the district for private builders since its Easington Interim Housing Study of 1975, although this study did conclude that the need for further housing would have to be mainly met by council housing. Easington had been offering long-term tenants discount terms to buy their council houses since 1978. Many tenants bought in the wake of a £4.5m council programme to install solid fuel central heating; sales which the council supported even though the waiting list at the end of 1980 stood at 3,824 (118). The council had been selling a large number of its houses prior to the 1980 Housing Act following its adoption of a policy of selling to sitting tenants in 1978, and continued to do so afterwards. Ironically, the effect of the 1980 Housing Act was to slow sales down due to lengthier administrative procedures (119). However, the Act was welcomed by the council in assisting with its policy of promoting home ownership. In 1981/82 it extended this privatisation into the development of several "low cost" home ownership initiatives. Earlier promotional exercises had resulted in Wimpey building a large estate in Seaham, tapping a big commuter market of people who worked in Sunderland. A 700 unit private estate was also built in Peterlee, at prices ranging from £15,500 to £60,000. In addition, in accordance with central government policy, the Development Corporation was promoting land for private development.

Easington responded to the cuts of 1981/82 with close financial monitoring. It also took up Improvement for Sale and made use of Building Society finance. The council had been attempting to keep rents

down (with some negative impact on repairs and maintenance), but one of its officers expressed some concern that in the longer-term sales would put pressure on rents and marginalise council housing as a tenure for "management problem" benefit recipients (120). The council also took steps to keep its Direct Labour Organisation intact and stable following the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act, constructing its HIP programme so that there were opportunities for the DLO to tender. It continued discretionary improvement grants, having commitments to supply grants to National Coal Board properties the NCB wanted to sell. But the council did not declare any Housing Action Areas or General Improvement Areas, preferring not to earmark areas for improvement. It was having to be increasingly selective and short-term in its housing action.

The effects of the shift from "modern" to "early post-modern" housing policy in Easington can be seen from examining its housing expenditure (121). This shows a clear movement from new build to renovating the existing stock, although by far the largest amounts were for renovating the council stock. This should, however, be seen in conjunction with the sales policy. In 1977/78, 73 per cent of Easington's HIP expenditure was allocated to new housebuilding and slum clearance, and 27 per cent to renovation work (including grants and loans). By 1982/83 new build and slum clearance had fallen to 12 per cent and renovation work grown to 88 per cent. Thirty-two per cent of HIP expenditure in 1981/82 was on council house improvements in the district generally, 25 per cent on remedial works in the new town estates, 5 per cent on capitalised repairs and 10 per cent on improvement grants.

The Easington District Plan published in 1982, was a clear departure from the modernisation policy of the 1960s (122). It argued that the shortage of sites for private "executive housing" was making the district less attractive for investors, and also asserted the need for more private housing generally to achieve a "tenure balance". With the county structure plan's settlement categorisation policy rejected by central government in 1980 following the Examination in Public, Easington saw down-market private housing as a way not only of correcting "tenure imbalance", but also of stemming the out-migration of young people from the villages and assisting the return of older people to their original homes. There was also a commuter market it hoped to tap. Much of the council's land holdings were in the villages as a result of earlier clearance. Now private developers were to be encouraged to make proposals and tender for low cost housing schemes on these sites. Costs would be reduced, the council argued, by the prospect of quick returns and "economies in design" (123).

Easington was the first local authority in the country to tackle the difficult-to-let problems of former Development Corporation stock through Improvement for Sale. This opportunity was enthusiastically taken up by council officers following the introduction of Circular 20/80, "Local Authority Improvement for Sale Scheme" (124). £125,000 was allocated for 1981/82 to improve new town properties for sale. Other areas, however, could not be "saved": 53 dwellings in Peterlee were demolished in 1981/82 due to structural and stability problems, with costs borne by the Housing Revenue Account, including outstanding loan debt. The council suspended consideration of the nature and extent

of any further demolition pending the outcome of its claim under the 1981 New Towns Act for Exchequer assistance. Another problem it faced was the unpopularity of remedial work, with its fairly low profit margins, among private contractors.

The council was very concerned about the falling level of support from central government. The 1982 HIP bid stressed that capital receipts and privatisation would not offset diminishing capital allocations from central government, particularly as the potential for future sales was limited owing to the fact that over 40 per cent of the council's tenants were receiving supplementary benefit or rent rebate, unemployment was rising and much of the stock was unsellable (125). Section 51 of the 1981 New Towns Act made available central government assistance with expenditure required to renovate former Development Corporation dwellings, and Easington made a claim for £45m at April 1980 prices over ten years to tackle defects in the 6,500 dwellings affected. The submitted programme, it added, would be subject to revision "in the light of changing priorities caused by structural deterioration and tenant problems" (126). As was noted earlier, central government assistance was to come nowhere near the figure bid for. In general, the housing situation, like the employment situation, was seen to have a very gloomy future by the council. In 1982 the Easington District Plan stated:

"Due to the further reduction in housing finance proposed by the Government, there is likely to be a reduced rate of improvement in both the public and private sectors over the Plan period. Given the serious nature and scale of housing problems in the District (approximately one in three dwellings in need of improvement), the

prospects over the Plan period are bleak unless Central Government policy is changed." (127)

#### 4.7 Summary

This chapter has shown, with particular reference to Bessemer Park and Peterlee, how the working class experience of the growth centres was one of imposed restructuring followed by decline. *This process was related* to the position of these two localities in the accumulation strategies of transnationals. Bessemer Park moved from being a growth centre's labour pool for branch plants to a depressed "problem estate" once employment in these plants declined. Initial attempts to tackle its problems through community work failed. The decision to demolish the flats was taken by the local council due to the financial costs of managing and maintaining an estate that only the most desperate would live in when "escape" within the district to traditional housing was possible. *Organised tenant protest was virtually absent* and appeared to play no part in this decision. This absence seems to have had much to do with the way the Bessemer Park "problem" was managed by the local state. The contrast with the intensity of community action in many Category "D" villages, and in the old neighbourhoods of Langley Park and Framwellgate Moor (chapters 5 and 6) is very marked. These were to a considerable extent "organised", "community-based" civil societies, or "oppositional cultures" in the context of modernisation, where state management had penetrated to a very limited extent and where local populations stood to lose not only use values but also exchange values if modernisation was imposed. Bessemer Park, however, was never an

"organised" community, despite efforts by the local state to organise it on its terms. It was created by the modernisation process but rendered peripheral by capitalist disorganisation. It was potentially disruptive but subject to a high degree of direct management by housing and social work services.

The history of Peterlee illustrates particularly well the social reform component of modernisation, but again imposed from above, within a framework dominated by the needs of capital. There were strong protests in the pit communities which bore the cost of its sub-regional impact. The new town shows why modernisation had to be undertaken by a corporatist agency owing to the vulnerability of the elected local council to local pressure. Massive physical restructuring made a "contest of domains" between the state and local civil society inevitable. Therefore, a state institution insulated from local civil society was much better placed to undertake restructuring than elected local government. In addition, the local council later had to manage the costs of the failure of modernisation in the context of a shortage of housing that people wanted to live in, falling resources from central government and the local tax base, and the marginalisation of state housing. Privatisation was seen as one solution. The community action response to the increasing individualisation of housing costs through substantial rent rises was very weak. Again, the disorganisation of the "community" through unemployment, marginalisation, privatisation and management of the local population appeared to be a significant factor here, including the individualisation of tenants' problems through the mechanisms of housing and social security administration (see Kraushaar,

1981; also Byrne, 1982; 1986; Mellor, 1985). However, organised tenant protest about housing improvements was more effective, but in this case the local council had an interest in achieving the co-operation of tenants in its efforts to safeguard the housing it could not sell or demolish, but for which management and maintenance costs would escalate without structural improvements.

The broad term "modernisation" has been used to describe the large scale, technologically rational and functionally efficient ethos of housing and planning policies as they emerged in the post-war local state in County Durham in response to the organised, Fordist pattern of production in the transnationals locating in the area. However, it is clear that this misses much of the detail of policy in this period. The traditional housing of the early development of Peterlee, its late entry into the transnational growth centre strategy, the national policy-making context, especially with regard to the changes in central government attitudes to "modern" mass housing (see Dunleavy, 1981) and the separate failures of industrial modernisation pursued by national governments (see Massey, 1984), the abandonment of the new towns programme in the 1950s and the shift to the "modernisation" of inner cities in 1977, are among the factors which complicate analysis. Nevertheless, it is still argued that "modernisation" is a good description of post-war housing and planning up to the 1970s in County Durham. After several years of transition and conflict which culminated in a political resolution with the victory of the New Right, a fundamentally different set of urban policies were implemented in the County through an increasing "nationalization" of housing and planning



policies, constituting what has been referred to as "early post-modernisation". The main elements of these policies have been identified as an emphasis on the recommodification of housing and flexible, entrepreneurial planning.

It is significant that in the early 1980s it was not possible to find any cases of residents organising to defend older private housing against the redevelopment of "near slums" in Easington, both because the council had largely adjusted its policies to the early post-modern climate which could to a large extent accommodate anti-modernisation attitudes and because of the extensive impact of earlier modernisation. The council's preoccupations lay elsewhere with the major problem of finding the resources for remedial works to its defective "modern" new town housing, and what weak community action there was occurred in these residualised parts of the new town housing sector. But in other districts in County Durham "modernisation" remained a strong influence on local housing policy. The next two chapters turn to the two main examples of this which were encountered during the research.

## CHAPTER 5

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN LANGLEY PARK, DERWENTSIDE.

#### 5.1 Railway Street: community action against "residual" modernism

This chapter is an account of the struggle of the residents of Railway Street, a stone-built terrace in the ex-pit village of Langley Park, County Durham, with the local authority, Labour-controlled Derwentside District Council, in the late 1970s-early 1980s. It illustrates how "residual modernism" continued in this area, i.e. how a local council attempted to pursue a strategy that while typical of the "modernisation era" was in conflict with many principles of "post-modern" housing policy as described in chapter 2. Derwentside Council wanted to clear Railway Street, a terrace of small houses built in the 1870s, and displace the residents to "better" housing conditions. The residents, most of whom belonged to the Railway Street Association (RSA), opposed the council's redevelopment plans and pressed for the retention and improvement of the Street. For many residents a housing co-operative was the vehicle by which they wanted to achieve this. Opposition to redevelopment led to a public local inquiry in February 1981. This provided an opportunity to examine the role of the inquiry in "adjusting" local housing policies.

By the end of the 1970s this type of inquiry about redevelopment had become relatively rare in contrast to the "modernisation era" and especially the 1960s. The shift in the wider housing policy climate was

illustrated by the vehicles that were available to the Railway Street residents to pursue their objectives, particularly Housing Corporation funding, the bias towards preserving and rehabilitating owner-occupied housing, encouraging self-help, and the extent of local and media (including TV) sympathy for campaigns against redevelopment. In fact, Railway Street's status as a survivor of the "modernist era" gave it a role as a filming location for a number of historical television dramas (128).

Railway Street had a lot of support in the village and from less organised groups facing similar problems elsewhere in the county (129). While there was always strong local support for the Labour Party in national elections in Langley Park, there was a feeling in the village against what was perceived as a lack of interest in the locality by a district council dominated by the main urban centre of Consett several miles away. This was reflected in the fact that the parish council was under Liberal and Independent control. The Labour district councillors' handling of the Railway Street dispute confirmed many residents' views that they were subject to the decisions of a party machine which had lost contact with any working class base in small communities. The hostility against Labour councillors from the Residents' Association, and their identification with local Independent councillors, meant that Railway Street received little support from any section of the Labour Party.

The arguments of this chapter are that despite the national climate of "rehabilitation" and particularly the provisions of the 1980 Housing Act

aimed at retaining the existing stock of older private housing, Derwentside continued with a "modernising" housing policy based on redevelopment. Community action in Railway Street can be understood as having the same cause, in a rather different context, as that described in the previous two chapters. This cause was the imposition by "officialdom" of a policy to replace "slums". While not now part of a spatial restructuring strategy, the approach bore many similarities with the corporatist management and social reformism of that era, and appeared to be a continuation of it within the functions of the district council. While Labour leaders in County Durham argued in the 1950s and '60s that "modernisation" was in the interests of the working class - an argument questioned in previous chapters - this position was even less convincing in the early post-modern context of the early 1980s, when so much modern state housing was "difficult-to-live-in" and the attributes of many areas of older private housing, such as community life, local amenities and low costs, were seen as particularly attractive.

The next section examines the nature of Derwentide's housing policy in the late 1970s and early '80s before turning to the RSA's struggle.

## 5.2 Derwentside Council's attempt to continue a modernist housing policy

As discussed in chapter 2, the 1970s were a period of transition from "modernism" to "post-modernism" in housing policy. When, under the 1974 Housing Act, local authorities were required to develop local improvement strategies for their older housing stock, rather than

redevelopment, the new Derwentside District Council reviewed the condition of older housing in its area. The council inherited a relatively old stock containing many substandard dwellings. Much of it had been built for coal, iron and steel workers in the nineteenth century.

In 1976 the County Planning Department estimated that a third of Derwentside's housing stock was built before 1919, and reported that the 1971 Census showed that the availability of the three standard amenities was generally, apart from the provision of hot water, worse than that for the county as a whole (130). In 1971 over 30 per cent of all households lacked or shared an internal WC. The council's 1974 survey found many houses in a state of disrepair. Properties identified as being beyond "economic rehabilitation" were listed in a report dated July 1974 which was approved by the council. Railway Street was included in this list of clearance area houses, and any entitlement to renovation grants was withdrawn. Such action had not been the intention of the 1974 Housing Act!

Derwentside applied Part III of the 1957 Housing Act, a modernising piece of consolidating legislation. Under this Act, to be included in a clearance area a house must be unfit or injurious to health, but need not be incapable of being made fit at reasonable cost. The criteria applied are solely physical, in contrast to the social factors and community orientation of the 1974 Housing Act's provisions for housing renewal (an early piece of "post-modern" legislation) (McAuslan, 1980, pp. 101-102; Cullingworth, 1985, pp. 267-268).

Derwentside adopted a policy of clearing "substandard" private housing and rehousing displaced households in council accommodation. It intended to clear 1,889 dwellings over a ten year period, 5.5 per cent of the total stock in 1976. The council wanted to build new council houses to modern standards with gardens, and in 1975 declared its intention to erect 700 houses a year. The dramatic impact of central government cuts in the 1970s on this objective is illustrated by Table 5.1:

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Table 5.1: LOCAL AUTHORITY DWELLINGS STARTED IN DERWENTSIDE, 1972-1981\*

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
646	257	241	422	298	150	176	78	9	82

\* Pre-1974 figures derived from amalgamations of local authority areas to approximate Derwentside District

Source: see note 131.

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Against a background of a slowly declining total population but an increasing number of households, Derwentside planned to continue a steady increase in the size of its total housing stock through its building programme. Between 1967 and 1981 the number of public sector completions exceeded the private sector, although during the last three years of this period activity in both sectors slumped to a low level. Output after 1975 fell far short of the 700 per year target, even combining the private and public sectors. In addition, by 1980 the council had cleared 1,029 dwellings, only 55 per cent of the 1984 target set in 1974, which would not be achieved by a considerable margin.

Table 5.2 shows how Derwentside's scale of demolitions adjusted to national pressures to retain older housing a few years after the decline in house completions brought about by reduced resources at the end of modernisation, and this was significant from the point of view of the present case study, for the RSA argued that the two were indeed out of line.

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Table 5.2: CHANGES IN THE HOUSING STOCK, DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL, 1961-1981

Year	<u>Completions</u>			Clearance	Net change	Total stock
	Public	Private	Total			
1961	174	215	389	68	321	31,232
1971	523	215	738	233	505	33,159
1981	112	71	183	208	-25	35,100
1982/83	89	53	142	36	106	35,300

Sources: see note 132.

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The lack of growth which underlay the abandonment of modernisation is reflected in the County Planning Department's forecasts towards the end of the 1970s. In 1976 the Department estimated that the future "demand" for housing in Derwentside in 1981 would be 34,314 houses, and that in 1991 it would be 33,603. Since the total stock in 1974 was estimated at 34,684, it concluded that "no more houses need to be built to meet projected demand" (133), a very different scenario compared with the 1960s and early '70s.

The nature of Derwentside's housing activity compared with the average for the other County Durham district councils during the 1970s is illustrated in Table 5.3:

Table 5.3: COMPARISONS BETWEEN DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE REST OF DURHAM COUNTY DISTRICT COUNCILS (EXCLUDING NEW TOWNS): SLUM CLEARANCE, DISCRETIONARY RENOVATION GRANTS, PRIVATE DWELLINGS STARTED AND LOCAL AUTHORITY DWELLINGS STARTED, 1972-1981.

	<u>per 10,000 of total population</u>									
	1972*	1973*	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
SLUM CLEARANCE										
Derwentside	35	26	18	21	29	4	42	8	***	***
The rest**	18	17	6	22	10	8	9	7	***	***
DISCRETIONARY RENOVATION GRANTS										
Derwentside	90	120	58	33	24	21	16	24	6	3
The rest	83	82	42	28	24	22	29	20	18	7
PRIVATE DWELLINGS STARTED										
Derwentside	22	12	5	9	19	20	6	16	3	4
The rest	28	39	20	23	26	28	27	28	13	15
COUNCIL DWELLINGS STARTED										
Derwentside	69	27	26	46	33	16	20	9	1	9
The rest	24	22	29	28	20	15	15	8	6	3

\* Amalgamations of pre-1974 local authority areas to approximate post-1974 local authority areas.

\*\* Averages for the remaining seven Durham County district councils.

\*\*\* Data unavailable.

Sources: see note 134.



Derwentside's rate of slum clearance was higher than the average for the other Durham County district councils. Its level of discretionary grant-aid to private households for renovation was generally similar to the other authorities. In 1979 and 1980 the number of dwellings cleared by Derwentside exceeded total public and private new construction starts, which was unique among the Durham district councils. Its higher than average level of council house building and appreciably lower level of private construction are evident from the table. On all indicators the picture is one of decline in housing activity throughout the county over this period, especially post-1979, with Derwentside particularly badly affected in terms of its vulnerability to public housing expenditure cuts. Derwentside clearly benefitted to an above-average extent from the funds available for clearance and council housebuilding during the "modernisation era", but to an equal extent was hit by the withdrawal of these funds as the era ended. By the end of the 1970s government cuts had reduced its building to a small residual programme, principally housing for old persons.

Despite central government constraints, Derwentside remained wedded to redevelopment and council housing as the main solution to its housing problems and the central activity of its housing department, rather than rehabilitation and support for the private sector. However, it adjusted its approach to demographic changes, as the 1979 Local Housing Strategy stated:

"There is a clear need for a continuing emphasis to be placed on the provision of aged persons' dwellings and single person accommodation, the principle solution to which is to be through activity in the public sector involving local authority provision

with some limited Housing Association activity. This is recognised to be a clear priority of the Authority." (135)

In common with other Durham County authorities, Derwentside concentrated on the provision of 3 and 4 bedroom houses in the 1960s on the basis of what emerged as the overblown population projections of the time (136). The fall in the birth rate in the mid-1960s and the trend to a smaller household size, compounded by outmigration, left Derwentside with a shortage of smaller dwellings, a problem which was more acute for the district than for the county as a whole. The fact that Railway Street consisted of small two-bedroom houses might be expected to have been in its favour, but the council did not regard such housing as part of a modern housing stock. The council's view on the matter is set out in its Housing Strategy and Investment Programme 1979-1984:

"Over 30 per cent of Derwentside's existing housing stock was built before 1919, much of it in the form of small terraced properties incapable of satisfactory improvement to modern living standards. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is essential to maintain a varied housing stock capable of meeting the requirements of all family sizes and incomes, there is at the moment an over representation of small terraced dwellings. A certain number have been included on the list of sub-standard housing and will be dealt with in due course. The remainder pose a real problem as many can be classed as being fit according to the Housing Act 1957 definition, but would require a disproportionate amount of capital to be spent on them to improve them to an acceptable level. The Council in the meantime has continued to construct dwellings which are being readily occupied." (137; emphasis added)

There was clearly no intention to consult with the people affected about the options available. In common with usual local government procedures, the HIP documents were drawn up by senior officers and approved by councillors without any public consultation or

participation. When Railway Street Residents' Association wanted to refer to this Local Housing Strategy in the public inquiry, they were prevented from doing so by the Inspector's ruling that it was beyond the terms of reference of such an inquiry. Yet one of the main arguments of the Association was that the Street was being subjected to a policy prescription that, while having been appropriate in the past, was not suitable in the contemporary situation. This situation was one where most of the bad housing stock had been demolished while most of the remaining old terraced housing was generally popular, relatively cheap and conveniently located. In addition, public perceptions about poor design and paternalistic management made a lot of the available council housing undesirable for local people.

The national "early post-modernist" housing strategy put increasing pressure on Derwentside to abandon its modernising housing policy and to retain its older private housing stock. Its HIP allocations were drastically reduced from 1979/80, and the 1980 Housing Act, particularly Department of the Environment Circular 13/81, added to the considerably reduced ability of the council to pursue actions in conflict with central government policies. The latter were aimed at achieving an absolute reduction in the size of the state housing sector and a concentration of resources on "properties that most need improving". It was clear from the legislation and accompanying circulars that as part of the strategy of privatising consumption, local councils would be pressed into making as much use as possible of private sector housing. For example, Department of the Environment Circular 13/81, issued on 5

May 1981, made it very difficult for local councils to make Compulsory Purchase Orders and clear older stock. It stated:

"Compulsory purchase orders almost always cause uncertainty and anxiety and therefore should not be made unless there is a compelling case in the public interest for doing so ... Orders are unlikely to be confirmed where the acquisition is of private housing that is in satisfactory condition or of private housing in unsatisfactory condition where the owners are willing to improve the dwellings themselves. Confirmation of such orders would be inconsistent with the Government's policy of concentrating housing public expenditure on projects where there will be a clear housing gain not otherwise achievable." (138)

Despite this clear change in housing policy towards privatisation and a residual role for the public sector, Derwentside took the decision to declare the Railway Street clearance area in accordance with the policies stated in its 1979 Local Housing Strategy (139). The commitment of successive Labour councils in the area to state housing meant that Derwentside did not have a crude housing shortage, although as noted above there was a shortage of small dwellings. In the early 1980 its waiting list stood at 3,000, but many of these applicants had registered "for the long term" (140). The 1979 Local Housing Strategy states that Derwentside had a crude housing surplus of 100 dwellings. For the council, this gave them the justification for the clearance of older "substandard" housing even when their ability to build had been drastically curtailed. It was the feeling of being caught in this numbers game that to a large extent fuelled the determination of the Railway Street residents to argue their case.

There was, however, another important reason why the Street's resistance was so strong, already considered in chapter 2. The experience of mass state housing had made public sector housing generally unpopular and the residents had no wish to have the council as their landlord, which many feared would happen if the Street was redeveloped. In 1980, 44.6 per cent of Derwentside's housing stock was in the public sector, compared with a Great Britain average of 32 per cent (141). In the same year the council estimated that 30 per cent of its own stock was "difficult-to-let", the highest proportion for any local authority in England (142). Many of Derwentside's council houses were not substandard but had been fitted with electric ceiling heating and were "difficult-to-live-in". Tenants in these properties were getting extremely high electricity bills. One of many newspaper reports on the issue described the situation as follows:

"The 86 families on Langdale Way Estate at Langley Park have sent a petition demanding action. They have told Derwentside District Council the problem has existed since the houses were built a decade ago. Many of the tenants claim they do not know how they will pay bills of £300 and £400 facing them for using the ceiling heaters during the freeze up in December and early January. The petition, which asks that people living in Langdale Way be allowed to remain on the council housing list and be transferred to other property as soon as possible if nothing is done to solve their problem, was organised by Mrs Cynthia Cox, of 66 Langdale Way. Mr Malcolm Davies, chief technical officer for Derwentside Council, confirmed they know that the Flexol ceiling heating is expensive to run. The council have considered changing it, but cutbacks and lack of money will not allow it" (143).

The issue was highlighted at the Railway Street public inquiry because some of the Street's residents thought they might be rehoused in ceiling heated council housing. The existence of unpopular and empty

council properties not classified as substandard was a threat to them. Many existing tenants wanted transfers but because the houses were not classed as substandard they were ineligible for transfer on those grounds. The council eventually secured the funds for heating conversions in Langdale Way in 1983. However, at the public inquiry the RSA planned to present Derwentside as an authority obsessed with knocking down homes it did not own while many of its tenants were trapped in unpopular council housing (144).

Derwentside felt it had to maintain its housing capital allocation despite the eradication of crude shortages and was concerned about the rundown of state investment in the district's housing and infrastructure. The council's 1981/82 HIP bid, for example, was for over £9m, but it was allocated only £3.1m by central government (145). This decision to grant Derwentside only one third of its HIP bid severely constrained its housing options. In addition the climate created by central government circulars was not in line with the council's approach to older private housing. The HIP cut resulted in the council taking the decision to limit renovation grants to what by law it had to provide - mandatory intermediate grants and in some cases repair grants. The council considered that its own planned housing programme should take priority over discretionary improvement grants, even though it was well aware of problems of deterioration in the private sector (146). The priority for the council was the improvement of its own housing stock, reflected in the £4.5m for this included in the 1981/82 HIP bid. In 1981/82 it was approving some repair grants but intended to cut back on them if the renovation grant budget became

stretched, and there was no intention to publicise mandatory repair grants. Although the grants budget increased from £0.30m to £0.46m between 1979/80 and 1980/81, most of this was taken up by increases in eligible expense limits introduced by the 1980 Housing Act.

Another indication of the relatively low priority given to saving the older private housing stock of the district was the fact that the only General Improvement Area in Derwentside was inherited from a small pre-1974 reorganisation authority. This contrasted with twelve GIAs in the other main West Durham authority, Wear Valley (see chapter 3). Chester-le-Street and Durham had one each, Darlington three and Sedgefield nine (147); yet Derwentside had a greater problem of old and substandard dwellings than these other authorities.

Derwentside's housing officers were well aware of the new emphases of "early post-modern" housing policy, and appeared to "play the system" to some extent. For example, one of its senior officers took the view that its HIP bids were "excessive" (148). In addition, the 1979 Housing Strategy included, for the first time, a role for housing associations and private sector area improvement:

"In connection with the possible improvement of houses in Railway Street, Langley Park, the Council is in discussion with representatives of the owners, involving a newly formed Housing Co-operative working closely with a Housing Association - an arrangement quite unique for the area ...

In the private sector area improvement schemes have ... not featured in the Council's programme but following recent approaches by residents' associations the potential for environmental works has been considered and it is anticipated that consideration will be given to the suitability of some General Improvement Areas being

declared. In this regard properties in New Kyo and Railway Street, Langley Park may attract support during the period." (149)

The role for housing associations and GIAs referred to in the 1979 Local Housing Strategy contrasted starkly with the council's determination to clear Railway Street. It is possible that the council considered that their HIP bid would be treated more favourably by the Department of the Environment if it included reference to these items, which were in favour with central government.

To conclude this section, a number of points can be made. Derwentside was greatly constrained by financial controls and central government guidelines from 1980 (the "nationalization of housing policy" referred to in chapter 2). The time when a local authority could pursue a policy of slum clearance and building council houses with substantial central government support had passed. But the council decided to pursue its case for the demolition of Railway Street. The resulting public inquiry illustrated many interesting features of "early post-modern" housing strategy, and showed how the inquiry could be used as a mechanism by which early post-modern policy at the level of a particular small locality could be imposed on local government, and parallels growing concern in planning circles about public inquiries becoming instruments of policy-making outside of a local democratic process. But it was also apparent that the local council's corporatist structure - its "inner circle" of senior Labour Group members and senior officers - and its organisation and management style, excluded residents affected by its decisions from any formal means of influencing those decisions, without



recourse to the public inquiry and "arbitration" by central government. The Railway Street residents were not involved in, or even consulted about, a decision that would directly affect them, in the way that the local council might have consulted with trade unions or local employers. The council appeared to take the position that the co-operation of the Railway Street residents was not needed to implement its decision in contrast to, for example, Peterlee, where the co-operation of tenants was needed to enable housing improvements to go ahead without disruption (see chapter 4).

### 5.3 The public local inquiry

In September 1978 Railway Street was surveyed by Derwentside's Environmental Health Department. There was no consultation with residents about the survey and it caused concern among them about the Street's future. At a well-attended meeting on 25 September 1978 the residents decided to form the Railway Street Association (RSA), with the aim of retaining and improving the Street. A three-year long campaign began, involving the organisation of a social survey, the production of two reports, and detailed investigations into sources of funding for improvements and the feasibility of a housing co-operative. The RSA had numerous meetings with council officers and councillors. None of this led the council to change its decision to clear the houses and, as noted below, the council's actions sometimes gave the appearance of openness to the residents' counter-proposals while in reality the decision to demolish had been taken by the Labour Group who regarded the decision as non-negotiable.

The social survey was carried by students in 1978. It revealed that most of the Street's residents were young adults with small children (148). Twenty-one of the twenty-five houses were occupied, and of these four were internally modified to form a single dwelling. Nineteen of the houses were owner-occupied, two were rented as furnished accommodation, one was derelict and unoccupied, two were owned by the National Coal Board and one was owned by Derwentside District Council. When the Street was owned by the NCB the houses often provided the first home for young mining families who would move on to larger NCB or council houses as their family grew. As a result, the 1978 survey showed an average length of residence of four years, with a range from six months to nine years. The residency of most of the families dated from the mid-1970s when, following the run-down and eventual closure of Langley Park colliery in 1976, the NCB started to sell the houses to their occupants or to non-mining families. Most of the residents lived locally before moving to Railway Street. There was a strong attachment to the Street, for both practical and emotional reasons and, it should be added, it offered an environment conducive to self-help and entailing low reproductive costs to the state.

The survey discovered that the main reasons why people had moved to the Street were to be near friends or because it was a close-knit and friendly community. An important secondary reason was that the houses were cheap. Half of the Street's adults were in full-time waged employment, with a wide range of occupations and socio-economic groups. Of those not in full-time waged employment, seven were unemployed, three were one-parent families, three were students, one an old-age pensioner

and five were housewives. The survey found the Street "to be in an ideal position with regards to employment, schools, shops and other public amenities", contrasting markedly with the type of conditions in the growth centre mass housing estates described in chapter 4. It found that there were very close family ties between the Street's residents and nearby streets and villages. There was also a great deal of sharing of skills and resources. Of its eighteen families, only one wanted to move from Railway Street.

Derwentside's Environmental Health Officer recommended clearance action to the council in February 1979. The residents organised a petition for any decision to be deferred until they had worked out improvement proposals, including the housing co-operative. Excluded from any say in the decision to redevelop the Street, the residents set about developing their own proposals and organising independent means of realising them. Support for their case came from the Beamish North of England Open Air Museum, which sent a letter to the council pointing out the historic importance of the "typical pit village cottages" and suggesting that they should be improved rather than demolished. The Civic Trust also supported their retention.

Derwentside's Health and Environmental Services Committee deferred the declaration of a clearance area and authorised a meeting between a sub-committee of councillors and the residents. This took place on 26 March 1979. The residents were accompanied by a volunteer architect and submitted a technical report they had drawn up. They told the sub-committee that ten householders wanted to form a housing co-op and were

seeking registration and funding from the Housing Corporation. The remaining twelve householders hoped to obtain improvement grants from the council. Following the meeting, the sub-committee recommended that the council should defer the matter for six months so that the residents' proposals could be examined in more detail and the residents themselves could complete their investigations and consider the implications of the council's requirement that all the residents had to be committed to rehabilitating their houses. There was to be no Housing Action Area and compulsory improvement.

The RSA had been put in touch with Banks of the Wear Co-operative Housing Services Ltd., by the Co-operative Housing Agency. Banks of the Wear CHS was a Sunderland-based secondary housing co-operative which agreed to act as development agents for the RSA. The Railway Street Housing Co-operative was registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies in 1979. However financial help for the co-operative from the Housing Corporation was dependent on the council guaranteeing the houses a thirty year life and supporting environmental works, possibly through a General Improvement Area. The council was not prepared to do this; it argued that its housing budget had been so severely reduced in recent years that it did not have the resources for environmental works to either private or council housing. In addition, its policy was not to make improvement grants to "substandard" housing.

The residents, with the support of their architect and Banks of the Wear CHS, argued that the houses were in near perfect structural condition. The council did not deny this but insisted that improvement to the

statutory fitness requirements could not be achieved "economically". Most of the residents wanted to have these improvements carried out. In contrast to many other redevelopment campaigns the question of what constituted a house unfit for human habitation was not at issue (contrast Framwellgate Moor, Chapter 6; see also Dennis, 1970; 1972). It was clear, however, that the houses could be improved to a satisfactory standard. The residents' architect's perception of the situation is summarised in the following passage from the Inspector's report on the public inquiry :

"The most basic improvement needed is the installation of an internal water closet. In 11 houses the kitchens are too small and lack adequate natural lighting. There is evidence of rising damp which, though slight in most cases, needs attention and the walls need repointing to prevent penetrating damp. Some chimney stacks need rebuilding and most of the rainwater fittings need replacing. The open drainage system for waste water needs replacing with an enclosed arrangement. About one quarter of the door and windows need to be repaired or replaced ... The houses are capable of rehabilitation at reasonable cost. Moreover, their setting is equally capable of being upgraded." (149)

By August 1979 the RSA had obtained the written commitment of 80 per cent of the owners to improvement. The Housing Corporation had agreed that the houses were suitable for rehabilitation. Despite the RSA's efforts to furnish the council with the information they required - the commitment to improvement and detailed plans for rehabilitation and environmental works - it still refused to award the houses a thirty year life, and the clearance area was declared in January 1980. In February a petition was presented to the council with over 1,000 signatures asking that this decision be over-ruled. The Inspector's report on the objectors' case states:

"The request failed and the council made the order. Twelve months of hard work and co-operation with the council counted for nothing. The residents had complied with every request and satisfied every condition made by the council yet the grant of a 30 year life to houses considered structurally sound by the council and in a reasonable state of repair was turned down ... The objectors have supplied a succession of architect-designed schemes, carried out exhaustive surveys, made feasibility studies, solved organisational problems and found outside sources of finance. The council have done little but stonewall every proposal put to them." (150)

The council's negative attitude to the residents' proposals served to unite them against the authority. The following account by one of the residents illustrates how this common experience strengthened their determination to defend their community:

"The council's tactic was described by one resident, Ken Tait, as being 'To divide and rule. By putting successive obstacles in our path they hoped to wear us down'. However they were mistaken because the longer the battle continued the more determined the residents became. Instead of dividing the residents the council's policy helped to unite the residents. 'The more work we did the more certain we were that the houses could be improved' Ken Tait said." (151)

The RSA realised that collective activities were important to maintain solidarity and morale in the Street. The sense of "community" was deliberately strengthened. As Sennett (1986, p. 222) observes:

"The simplest way in which a communal identity is formed is when a group is threatened in its very survival ... While taking collective action to meet this threat, people feel close to one another and search for images that bind them together."

The RSA organised the clearing up of derelict land, a street party and the door-to-door petition. As the campaign gathered momentum the Street

attracted local TV, radio and newspaper publicity. One of the residents commented:

"The media's coverage did not change the council's mind but it did embarrass them. The important thing was the support we received from the public. It was very encouraging. We felt we were winning and it helped keep us going." (152)

The housing co-op and its members played a very active part in the RSA and in negotiations with the council, and clearly this alternative "vision" of co-operative housing motivated its members and highlighted even more strongly the "statism" of the local council. Opposition to the council came to focus on the fear of losing the "self help community spirit" of the Street and the investments that many residents had made in their homes. For example, two of the residents were mature students who relied on neighbours to look after their children, while a retired couple had spent £1,600 installing central heating into their house (153). The aim of preserving "a community" - in the sense of co-operation and shared experience in a small geographical area - was a very strong motivating force. The "modernisation era" had shown the costs that could be involved once "communities" were broken up and there was considerable cynicism about council policies.

The RSA also lobbied the local Labour Party, arguing pragmatically:

"The Labour Party heard that there was now a curb on council house building and tenants were being allowed to buy their own houses, and now seemed a good time to keep rather than destroy houses" (154).

The RSA's evidence to the public inquiry attempted to contrast national housing policy with Derwentside's Local Housing Strategy, arguing that the council was out of line with new priorities. But this was not accepted as evidence by the Inspector on the grounds that the inquiry was not concerned with broad policy issues, only technical evidence relating to the current situation in the Street. The RSA had aimed to make a key part of their case a criticism of Derwentside's housing policy, and were unaware that this could not be accepted at a public local inquiry. Far from offering an opportunity to debate the issues, the inquiry was a means by which central government could gather information about the case and then, not necessarily on the basis of this information, impose a solution concordant with its own policies.

It is worth noting a few points about the history of the public inquiry, since it forms a central part of this case study. It has its origins in the second half of the nineteenth century when industrial capitalists were coming into conflict with landowners opposing the spread of new utilities across their land. The new entrepreneurs claimed that these schemes would "serve the public benefit as well as their own profit" (155). Parliament became overwhelmed by the proliferation of Private Bills promoted by industrialists to override the legal protections of private property enjoyed by landowners. The work became delegated to Ministers who, it was argued, were "independent of all the parties, and the only available judge of the public interest". This involved employing Inspectors to hold public inquiries and report back to the Minister, who would make the final decision. Thus, inquiries have their



origins in a concern to achieve central government control over local conflicts of strategic significance.

In contrast to many planning inquiries, the terms of reference of the clearance inquiry is limited to questions of "fact" - e.g. is this house unfit and if so can it be made fit at reasonable cost? - rather than the interpretation of policy (Wraith and Lamb, 1971, pp. 137-146). The clearance inquiry is not a means by which the public can participate in policy-making, public inquiry's adversarial procedures particularly inhibiting public involvement (Armstrong, 1985), but is a means by which central government can inform itself of the issues and greatly influence local authority policy. It gives the impression of popular participation because of its pluralist appearance, but this form of management of objections only serves to blur the fact that the final decision is made by central government according to national priorities.

The Railway Street inquiry was an inquiry under Part III of the Housing Act 1957 relating to slum clearance. Following the Secretary of State's consideration of the Inspector's report, his/her decision is final.

The Compulsory Purchase Order may be confirmed, modified or rejected.

In the 1960s a large majority of Compulsory Purchase Orders which went to public inquiry were confirmed without amendment (Wraith and Lamb, 1971, p. 142); they were often components of urban restructuring strategies. From the late 1970s, however, the situation was very different and the emphasis was on preserving private housing. Broadly the same arguments were often being made by objectors, but their chances of success in County Durham were much better once strategic spatial

policy and housing modernisation had been abandoned by central government.

Aware that national policy was no longer biased towards redevelopment, Derwentside used a crude market argument to justify the clearance of Railway Street at the public inquiry (156). In deciding on the feasibility of improvement the council compared the market price of a refurbished house with the cost of improving it. The council valued a refurbished Railway Street house at £8,300, while the present value of one of the houses (£1,100) plus the cost of improvement (£9,350) and fees (£1,100) amounted to £11,550. On this basis the council argued that improvement was not rational. Although building a new council house would cost more than improving a Railway Street house, there were sufficient council houses in Langley Park to rehouse displaced residents.

The council criticised the designs which the residents had submitted as not reaching modern standards, and argued that an improved Railway Street house would have only about 70 per cent of the quality of a new council house, a very subjective assessment with which the Street's residents totally disagreed. The council also suggested that some residents would not be able to afford their contribution to improvement.

The council's argument was rejected by the residents at the inquiry, who replied that available relets were not suitable and were often difficult-to-let properties. They also pointed out that while the council was effectively arguing that there was a housing surplus in

Derwentside, the 1979 HIP bid stated that tenders for 866 new houses were planned to be let by the council between 1979/80 and 1983/84 (157).

The council's Deputy Chief Executive was cross-examined by a Newcastle-based solicitor specialising in Legal Aid work who had been working with the RSA on their case for the inquiry for some weeks. The RSA had concluded that the council had managed the residents' protests by "stringing them along", while it was actually determined to pursue redevelopment, and their solicitor's line of questioning was designed to try and bring this out into the open. He pointed out that the council had said that improvement would be accepted if HIP money was available: therefore the houses were not irredeemably unfit. He suggested that:

"The residents were led along by the council when their suggestions were doomed from the outset." (158)

He stated that the residents were not disputing that the houses were unfit and stressed that the council accepted that they could be improved, its officers having met with the residents to discuss how this could be done:

"It would appear that some officers were doing all they could to consider improvement, but that the strategy was eventually rejected by councillors." (159)

The RSA's solicitor drew the inquiry's attention to the reference to Railway Street as a potential GIA in the 1979 HIP bid. The Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer replied:

"The reference to Railway Street in the 1979 HIP bid was an attempt to keep the council's options open, but the money for improvement was not made available. Railway Street was being discussed at officer level when the 1979 HIP application was put in to the DOE. It was an attempt to keep the options open." (160)

The attitude of Derwentside to improving older private housing was not the same as some other district councils in the North East and it seems likely that the street would have been retained and improved but for being in Derwentside (161). In addition, while the Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer argued that the 1980 Housing Act did not affect their decision about Railway Street, he acknowledged that "the council was beginning to see improvement as an easier option" (162). However, the council had no intention of working with the residents to find a solution to the problem, and chose to impose modernisation, as the following series of exchanges at the public inquiry illustrates:

RSA Solicitor: "I would suggest that the Environmental Health Officer entered into negotiations with the RSA even though he thought the houses could not be made fit at reasonable cost"

Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer: "I accepted that the residents had the intention to improve, but I doubted their commitment. In addition, certain of the residents' association's proposals would not provide satisfactory accommodation"

Inspector (interjecting): "Why did quite a large district council expect the residents' association to go on trying to improve their plans themselves, when the council could have assisted with their own technical officers?"

Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer: "The council only has responsibility for public sector housing"

Inspector: "But shouldn't the council have come up with its own improvement scheme for some of the oldest and worst housing in their area?"

Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer: "The council did consider its own scheme for extensions but decided it was too costly"

Inspector: "This suggests that the council was only prepared to look at the residents' association's proposals to find errors. I wonder whether this adds weight to the argument that the council had made up its mind in advance." (163)

The Inspector continued his intervention by pointing out that certain design changes could meet most of the council's objections regarding natural lighting, space requirements and defensible space. The RSA solicitor suggested that the council's own plans for improving the houses, which had never been discussed with the residents, only served to legitimate the claim that the cost of improvement was excessive. It emerged that the plans the RSA had submitted to the council were not passed on to the council's architects, but that the decision to turn them down was taken by the Environmental Health Department.

The RSA argued that while adjoining colliery houses had been rehabilitated and included in a GIA by the former small Lanchester Rural District Council, and other adjoining streets were eligible for improvement grants, Railway Street had been blighted by its inclusion in the clearance programme of the larger, corporatist post-1974 Derwentside Council. Despite this, individual owners had sought to maintain and improve their houses to a good standard - self-reliance which appeared to impress the Inspector. The council was planning to destroy a piece of Britain's vernacular building heritage when the Street could be improved. The houses were basically sound, in contrast to some areas of recently built public sector housing such as in Peterlee.

The council's solicitor questioned the credibility of the RSA's evidence. The RSA was made up of unqualified residents who took a biased view of the council's proposals. The Inspector was very sceptical of this professional elitism, and on a number of occasions expressed surprise at the expertise the residents had shown. Indeed, this questioning of "professional" values in housing and planning appeared to reflect a decline of their dominance in urban policy with the demise of modernisation (see Deakin, 1985).

One of the most effective pieces of evidence at the inquiry was the contribution by Banks of the Wear CHS, which argued that the housing co-operative proposals were realistic and the council's proposals unrealistic. A Development Officer claimed that one of the reasons why Derwentside did not want to award a 30 year life to the houses was that then all the residents would be able to apply for mandatory renovation grants. It thus appeared that the denial of 30 year lives was being used to control the council's own expenditure and to prevent its housing budget being eaten into by mandatory payments dependent on demand from owner-occupiers. He attacked Derwentside's "market value" argument:

"As a basis for making a decision for or against improvement, market value is not necessarily an accurate guide. It is imprecise, misleading and irrelevant. Very few houses would ever be modernised on this basis ... The market value method would result in widespread demolition, out of line with both the DOE and most local authorities. On this basis, council houses would probably never be modernised either. Derwentside have a long waiting list for housing already, which would be lengthened if the Order is confirmed. Demolition will cause the permanent loss of 25 basically sound houses from the available stock." (164)

This reflects how "early post-modern" housing policy was not about withdrawing subsidy from housing as a whole, but about restructuring subsidy. The council's argument that demolition was the cheapest option was not, as might be thought, in harmony with this restructuring. But the assertion of self-reliance against "statism" was. The ideology of central government housing policy found a receptive audience in a community that had seen the results of modernisation in the large deprived housing estates that now existed in the county. The local perception of the situation was summed up very well by the chair of the Independent/Liberal controlled Esh Parish Council:

"The Railway Street Association has the unanimous support of Esh Parish Council in their desire to stay in their houses. They also have the support of the three local District councillors. The application of the market value criterion to other houses in need of improvement would result in the demolition of large areas of the village. The council has a deliberate policy of allowing certain properties to deteriorate, and it has had this 'master plan' for over a decade. The Parish Council is not aware of there being enough suitable housing available to rehouse the Railway Street residents, especially in view of the Right to Buy. How long will they have to wait? The decision to demolish is based on the subjective opinions of the councillors. The houses remind them of their own deprived childhoods. They think that the residents of Railway Street are not their sort of people and are better off dispersed. Councillors with these prejudices voted in support of the decision to demolish. They are damaging the social fabric of a community. Why should the council argue that the problems of city areas are different and therefore require different criteria when considering redevelopment or improvement?" (165)

Comparisons with state housing were made frequently at the inquiry. One of the residents, for example, claimed that if one item was enough to put a house on the "substandard list for demolition", then many council houses had to be included. A tenant from Langdale Way said that their houses were becoming as bad as Railway Street. Many people would

prefer to live in an improved Railway Street house rather than a council house, especially younger people. Another resident, in the final stages of the inquiry, stated:

"This public inquiry is the first time residents have been able to have a voice and not watch themselves being discussed at council meetings." (166)

#### 5.4 The outcome

On 13 April 1981 the Northern Regional Office of the Department of the Environment wrote to the Chief Executive of Derwentside District Council informing him of the Secretary of State's decision about the Railway Street CPO:

"The Inspector found that all the properties in the clearance area were correctly represented as unfit houses ... He was of the opinion, however, that demolition was not the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in the clearance area. The houses were sturdily constructed with thick stone walls and there was little evidence of instability. He considered that they should be improved and not demolished. The dwellings were of a reasonable size and were capable of improvement at reasonable cost for small families. He noted that there was a strong local wish that the houses should be improved and concluded that improvement was the right course ... The Inspector's findings of fact, conclusions and recommendation have been accepted and the Secretary of State has therefore decided not to confirm the order, as recommended by the Inspector." (167)

This clear-cut decision in favour of improvement would have been very unlikely at the height of the "modernisation era" in the 1960s (see chapter 2). But there were not, until the end of the decade, the vehicles to enable rehabilitation in such circumstances. In Railway



Street, following the inquiry, the Housing Corporation confirmed funding for the housing co-operative. As much work as possible was to be done by the members themselves. Intermediate grants became available to owner-occupiers in the Street.

However, there was a diminishing interest among residents in the RSA after the inquiry (168). No longer was it a community under threat. Some people withdrew from the co-op to apply for grants as owner-occupiers, influenced by the fact that legally they had to give and could not sell their house to the co-op. After the inquiry owner-occupiers stood to gain significantly. They would receive substantial grant-aid and there was a market demand for the houses.

While the changing attitude to older housing accelerated by the shift in central government policy from 1979 clearly created a context favourable to the RSA, if Railway Street had been in another district in the North East it would probably never have been threatened with clearance action at this time in the first place, but improved. The expertise and organisation of the RSA got nowhere with Derwentside District Council whose policy was set rigidly, but it did impress the Inspector at the public inquiry. Derwentside's Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer explained afterwards:

"The council made the decision to clear the houses in Railway Street before the 1980 Housing Act came into force. They stuck to this decision, and this put the council's officers in an awkward position at the inquiry." (169)

He felt that the willingness of the residents to improve was a major factor in the outcome of the inquiry. For him this confirmed the message of recent central government circulars, and many houses would have to be removed from the council's substandard list in other areas.

### 5.5 Summary and conclusions

At first sight, this chapter might be taken as supporting the Weberian perspectives on "evangelistic bureaucracies" developed by Davies (1972) and Dennis (1972) in particular. However, similar criticisms concerning the limitations of these perspectives may be made as with the "urban managerialism" concept of Pahl, which was discussed in chapter 1. Specifically, such accounts neglect the structural pressures which shape the nature of state institutions and state actions in capitalism, and which act upon the immediate managers of urban resources. In the present thesis it is suggested that these system forces derived from the nature of strategies of accumulation during the post-war boom, which exercised determining pressures for particular forms of reproduction. It has been argued that the shift of resources out of redevelopment and into rehabilitation which occurred from the late 1960s, and dominated national policy after 1979, was associated with the end of a "modernisation era", when planning and development had concentrated on the large-scale, technologically rational and functionally efficient re-shaping of urban environments and regions. This included large-scale spatial restructuring in County Durham and North Armagh, and heavily influenced the nature of local housing policies.

The outcome of the Railway Street public inquiry was consistent with policy developments in the "early post-modern" period. The effects of these developments have been noted as increased differentiation in reproduction/consumption, recommodification and a restructuring of state spending with the effect of residualising state housing as a solution to housing problems. Under Thatcher administrations, policies have increasingly reorientated reproductive strategy to privatised consumption and forms of self-reliance, adjusting inequalities in housing consumption to inequalities in income and wealth, and bringing housing expenditure under closer central control (Ball, 1983, p. 357; Leather and Murie, 1986). But as early as the 1974 Housing Act policy emphasised adjusting housing consumption to economic position. A Departmental circular of this time stated:

"Where authorities have been seeking to clear housing, especially dwellings which are fit or owner-occupied, it has proved much less easy to demonstrate that redevelopment is the best course, and resistance to such action has been increasing from residents of all kinds ... Rehabilitation should take place to varying standards to match the effective demand of individual occupiers ... It must be accepted - and willingly - that some houses of low quality meet a real need for cheap accommodation ..." (170)

Ironically, it was this legislation that caused Derwentside to review the condition of its older housing, but it adopted the solution offered by the modernist 1957 Housing Act, i.e., clearance, as the means of dealing with "substandard" housing in the private sector. Clearance is easier for a local authority than improvement, and in the interests of technical staff still oriented to modernisation. It also appears that with only what could be described as "near slums" left in the housing

stock, this housing was being tarnished with the same brush as slum housing by Derwentside's older councillors. The existence of a closed and strong local authority, and the degree of exclusion of housing "clients" in particular localities, was typical of officialdom-people relations during the "modernisation era" (see Dunleavy, 1981). Earlier chapters suggest that such state structures were no longer particularly functional to capital at the end of the modernisation era, and could actually be dysfunctional. But Derwentside had been held by the Labour Party for many years, and was strongly oriented to modernisation, so that a political commitment to the state as provider of means of reproduction, rather than as facilitator of an expanding sphere of circulation, continued into the 1980s, especially when the district had not seen protest on the scale of the mobilisation against Category "D" in South West Durham.

The 1969 and 1971 Housing Acts, which introduced General Improvement Areas and higher rates of grant respectively, did not have the impact on Derwentside that occurred very clearly in Wear Valley (see Chapter 3). The contrast is striking. In addition, the message of the 1974 Housing Act was clearly that housing such as Railway Street should be renovated. The 1980 Housing Act was not a complete break but a further development of the renovation approach along the lines of Labour's 1977 Green Paper:

"work on the renovation of older houses should be directed more at bringing larger numbers of houses up to a decent basic standard rather than on higher standard improvements of a smaller number of houses ... Where the economic costs of redevelopment and rehabilitation are evenly balanced there will normally be a strong case in favour of rehabilitation because of the social benefits" (Department of the Environment, 1977, pp. 94, 98).

The Railway Street public inquiry illustrated how the 1980 Housing Act resolved the contradiction between the Acts of 1957 and 1974 to put a clear emphasis on renovating houses that would previously have been cleared. The inquiry brought home to Derwentside the realities of the reaction against redevelopment, in a way that Category "D" struggles did to Wear Valley, and the effective dominance of national over local housing policy. The struggle of the Railway Street residents was one against "residual" modernisation, when modernisation as a growth strategy for the peripheral regions had ended. It was thus linked to the struggles described in previous chapters.

While the defence of local authority autonomy in housing policy is often seen as part of the defence of local democracy, it is apparent that in Railway Street the residents' experience in civil society of the local state was not of democratic practices, in the sense of negotiation between strategic requirements and local perceived needs, but was an experience of the imposition of a modernist ideology with no reference to the perceived needs of residents. These needs were largely prestructured by the reaction against state housing; what they didn't need was redevelopment. This created the type of officialdom-people cleavage exploited in New Right ideology which emphasises the local state in particular as an obstacle to, rather than guarantor of, freedom and "self ownership", a theme addressed in the concluding chapter. With regard to local democracy, the above study of the Railway Street public inquiry supports Bondi's (1987, p. 221) conclusion that:

"... local authorities have been characterized by some as democratic and open to popular pressure, and by others as elitist and remote

from the public. Authorities obviously differ between themselves, but ... the use of different styles of negotiation with different kinds of interests or actors may enable authorities to maintain an appearance of openness whilst strictly circumscribing the scope for popular intervention in the policy process."

In Derwentside, although the council's officers included rehabilitation in policy statements to central government and met with the RSA to discuss their proposals, the Labour Group which controlled the council remained committed to redevelopment without the consent of those directly affected. It chose to impose "modern" housing consumption values upon a group of residents whose actual housing consumption experiences in the "slums" of Railway Street were very positive. Undoubtedly this owed much to their houses' superior form and location compared with mass state housing, as well as the "community" it accommodated. Combined with the resources to "take on" the council over the issue, this led to a struggle which they won. It seems very unlikely that they would have been successful in retaining the Street in the 1960s, at the height of modernisation. But the outcome of the public inquiry reflected the national policy bias in favour of retaining older private housing and developing alternatives to the large municipal landlord which had served its purpose, and was increasingly an obstacle to, rather than agent of, central control and the restructuring of reproduction in the "post-modern" period.

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN FRAMWELLGATE MOOR, DURHAM CITY

This chapter is an account of community action against redevelopment in Old Framwellgate Moor, Durham City. In contrast to Railway Street (chapter 5), the housing campaign in Framwellgate Moor did not centre around arguments about the most appropriate solution to unfit housing, but involved local residents opposing the designation of their homes as "unfit for human habitation". As such, it was a more direct challenge to the principles of modernist housing policy because, as discussed in chapter 2, it became increasingly difficult from the end of the 1960s to demonstrate that "near slums" were unhealthy and should be cleared. The local council did not precipitate a public inquiry, and hence direct central government intervention, by declaring a clearance area. It adopted a strategy of excluding the housing from renovation grants and buying up properties, ultimately for clearance. With local housing policy dominated by the needs of the council's own stock, the residents of Old Framwellgate Moor seemed left trapped in a situation where a favourable position in the local housing market was completely undermined by council policies which were blighting the area. A local housing authority preoccupied with state housing dominated the housing consumption experiences of the residents of Old Framwellgate Moor well after national policy had moved away from state housing as an important means of reproduction. Old Framwellgate Moor met the needs of its residents, and although clearly not "modern" housing, was a physical neighbourhood where people wanted to continue to live. For owner-

occupiers, the popularity of the area seemed to guarantee their investments as long as there was no threat of redevelopment.

The following section considers Durham City's "modernist" housing policies, which are presented as background to the account of community action in Old Framwellgate Moor.

#### 6.1 Housing policy in Durham City, 1974-1982: the defence of council housing

In Durham City, the period 1974 to 1982 could be described as one of defending council housing against the pressures brought about by the end of modernisation. This is not immediately obvious. According to the County Planning Department, although the three former local authorities that were amalgamated to form Durham District had policies of large-scale slum clearance during the modernisation era, such an approach was reviewed by the new district council in 1974, leading to a change in emphasis towards improvement rather than clearance, in accordance with central government policy (171). Between 1961 and 1972, 1,462 dwellings were demolished in the three districts that in 1974 comprised the post-1974 authority of Durham City, an average of 122 per annum. From 1972 clearance declined to negligible levels and the 1982/83 Housing Investment Programme anticipated no slum clearance at all from 1981/82 to 1983/84 (172). However, despite an apparent commitment from 1974 to improving rather than replacing older private housing, the new council did not declare any Housing Action Areas and only one General Improvement Area (173).



Between 1971 and 1973 Durham's Development Area status entitled the city council to additional central government support for enhanced improvement grants, and this was reflected in a high rate of grant take-up. But from 1972 the number of discretionary renovation grants to the private sector declined. In 1981 they were suspended altogether due to the reduced HIP allocation and the council's commitment to revitalising council housing. Table 6.1 illustrates the decline in discretionary renovation grants during the 1970s. Mandatory grants show a different pattern however. Although there was also decline during the 1970s, the 1980 Housing Act imposed increased calls on local authority funds in this direction, as shown in Table 6.2.

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Table 6.1: DURHAM DISTRICT: NUMBER OF DISCRETIONARY RENOVATION GRANTS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, 1972-1981\*

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
828	501	223	134	214	133	141	123	100	8

\* 1972 and 1973 figures are the sum of figures for the three former local authorities that formed Durham District.

Source: see note 174.

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Table 6.2: DURHAM DISTRICT: NUMBER OF NON-DISCRETIONARY GRANTS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, 1972-1981\*

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
126	59	21	7	38	11	9	12	23	59

\* 1972 and 1973 figures are the sum of figures for the three former local authorities that formed Durham District.

Source: see note 175.

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In 1980 Durham City had no obvious housing shortages, with "very short" waiting lists and three small pockets of "difficult-to-let" properties (176). Council policy statements identified a need for smaller accommodation, especially OPDs and sheltered housing (177). There was a long history of council housebuilding in the district but not, as in Derwentside, against a background of low levels of private activity. In fact, private building had been higher than council building since at least 1961, in contrast to the county as a whole. Table 6.3 illustrates the changing pattern of housing activity during the 1970s:

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Table 6.3: DURHAM DISTRICT: CHANGE IN HOUSING STOCK, 1972-1981\*

	<u>Completions</u>		Demolitions	Net change
	Private	Local authority		
1972	682	145	182	+645
1973	583	57	65	+575
1974	242	131	67	+306
1975	312	237	115	+434
1976	383	82	7	+458
1977	366	13	25	+354
1978	296	55	22	+329
1979	276	39	26	+289
1980	178	21	6	+193
1981	134	13	0	+147

\* 1972 and 1973 figures are the sum of figures for the three former local authorities that formed Durham District.

Source: see note 178.

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In the first half of the 1970s completion rates in both the private and public sectors fluctuated. This gave way to a significant decline in both sectors in the late 1970s - particularly sharp in the public sector due to the withdrawal of central government support. Between 1975 and

1981 the council's new build programme consisted only of bungalows for the aged and handicapped (179). In 1975 it had been anticipated that 75 units per annum would be built over the next 5 years; an objective which it fell very far short of (180). As Table 6.3 shows, the stock continued to increase despite reductions in annual output, although at a much slower rate.

The major priority of Durham City Council from 1974 was not the retention and improvement of older private housing but its own council stock and "a steady programme of new special-category (council) housing; modernisation of pre-war (council) dwellings; major repairs and rewiring (of council houses)" (181; parentheses added)). At first this programme progressed satisfactorily, but reductions in central government allocations led to revisions and postponements. In 1980/81 a drastic cut in the HIP allocation severely set back the programme (see below).

These policies reflected the district's housing needs as the authority saw them, but there was no public consultation about what the needs were. The council was concerned about the shortage of modern housing in the City affordable to local people. Because of its stronger local economy, compared with surrounding depressed ex-pit villages, and its concentration of service employment, the council's view was that house prices were pushing new local households out of the City (see Durham Unemployment Forum, 1983). Although there had been an upward trend in the birth rate from 1977, this had not been reflected in population growth due to net migration losses. The council argued that these losses were largely due to a lack of affordable and suitable housing:

" ... a proportion of newly formed households seeking accommodation outside the local authority rented sector have to look outside the City for suitable accommodation which they can afford." (182)

While the council identified high house prices in the City (which included Framwellgate Moor) as a cause of people leaving the area, especially newly-formed households, this also meant a continuing market in what it regarded as "substandard" property of the type demolished on a large scale in the 1960s:

"In May 1981 local estate agents indicated that the price of City Centre terraced housing had increased 100 per cent in 2.5 years ... At the lower end of the market, most sub-standard properties can be sold without undue difficulty." (183)

The council concluded that the severe shortage of modern, relatively low-priced housing was perpetuating a market in substandard properties which should be removed from the stock. This shortage was aggravated by the impact of students on the housing market and the popularity of the centre of Durham City as a place to live within the North East as a whole. The council also identified a continuing shortage of suitable building land. Its identification of potential sites in the 1980s included localities that during the "modernisation era" of the 1950s-60s had been declared unviable. For example, the 1982/83 HIP statement describes "currently untidy and unused" land in Langley Moor as "ideal" for development, given high demand and planning constraints elsewhere. Langley Moor is a small village two miles west of the city centre. It was designated a Category "D" village under the County Development Plan and in the 1970s was a scene of extensive and controversial clearance

which encountered local protest and demands that the houses should be rehabilitated and not demolished. It was this land, previously considered uneconomic for residential use during the modernisation era, that was now "high demand" residential development land.

The position of older private "substandard" housing in Durham City in the late 1970s was uncertain given council attitudes. Not only had the council continued the policies of its predecessors in not giving grants to houses considered "substandard", but in 1980 it discontinued lending to private buyers. The 1982/83 HIP statement argued that lack of funds prevented it from supporting the bottom end of the housing market:

"The Building Societies in the Support Lending Scheme will not accept unmodernised properties for advances (unless the Council agrees to waive repayment of grant in cases of default), whereas the Council would often be recommended to do so in particular cases if sufficient money were available to the Council. Unless monies are available, how can the Council be even 'lenders of last resort'?" (184)

To Old Framwellgate Moor's cost, the council did not see the rehabilitation of older private housing as a political priority, despite the popularity of this housing among low/moderate income groups in Durham. Its priority was spending on the council stock, which itself needed major refurbishment and work to correct defects in non-traditional housing types, a problem revealed by recent surveys which it argued were not being taken into account in central government HIP allocations (185).

In 1981 Durham's council housing stock stood at 12,960 dwellings, 40.2 per cent of the total stock of the district (186). Of these, 3,625 were pre-war. Three thousand of the post-war properties were over 30 years old (187). The council estimated that over £5.5m was required for modernisation and remedial works to its own stock, and in 1980/81 spent £1.8m on improving and repairing council properties, out of a total HIP budget of £2.1m (188). In 1981/82 the HIP allocation was cut by 20 per cent to £1.98m - despite a bid of over £4m - forcing the council to reduce specifications and standards for improvement work to its stock. Council mortgages and discretionary improvement grants were suspended. The cuts meant that the council's priority activities began to become its only ones, and were not only opposed by the council but also by local builders. In July 1980 the Durham City based Northern Counties Region of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers (NFBTE) protested that the cuts in capital spending would cause large-scale redundancies (189). The relaxation of Durham County Council's spatial policy following the Examination in Public of the Structure Plan was having little impact on builders' declining profits (190). There was a shortage of work, and the NFBTE accused the council of taking work away from its members by favouring the Direct Labour Organisation in its decisions to award contracts for even quite small jobs (191, 192). The council's Labour Leader replied:

"... the Government is deliberately attempting to destroy DLOs and that would leave private firms with a monopoly to charge local authorities what they liked. If the NFBTE is so worried about jobs lost it should make representations to its usual allies, the Tory Party, which is systematically destroying the whole of the building industry. It should not complain about a council which is striving

very hard to maintain its present services and workforce for the benefit of the people of Durham." (193)

In the May 1979 local election Labour lost the overall majority on the council it had held since the creation of the new authority in 1974. The Labour Group, however, retained power through the casting vote of the Mayor and majorities on committees until May 1980, when a coalition of minority groups narrowly achieved an overall majority and an Independent Mayor was elected. Controversy followed over the political distribution of committee chairs and vice-chairs, resulting in Labour (by far the largest political grouping) refusing offers of some vice-chairs and going into opposition where its position on Tory cuts would be unambiguous. This lasted until an overall Labour majority of five was achieved in May 1983. With ongoing restrictions on local government spending, the introduction of the 1980 Housing Act caused concern among Durham City councillors of all political complexions, and from the Labour Group met condemnation. New build for special needs and repairs to council housing had been priorities for Labour since 1974. They were not impressed with the new grants provisions, considering that they would force a reversal of housing policy in Durham to a "pre-modern era":

"... Coun. Alan Crooks (Labour, Bearpark) said the Act could be exploited by anyone buying old properties, installing toilets and either charging high rents or selling off the properties. 'We are going to produce better class slums' he said. Coun. Maurice Crathorne (Labour, Coxhoe) said the Act 'takes about five paces backwards'. Members had agreed in the past that there were some properties in the area which were not fit to receive improvement grants. 'Now we will have to give grants to pig-styes', he said. But Coun. Michael Johnson (Independent, West Rainton) suggested that there were some people in Durham on whose properties the council had

put a limited life who would welcome the Act'." (194; party affiliation and ward added)

The reference to pig styes did not go unnoticed by the residents of Old Framwellgate Moor where, as discussed below, they were struggling against the suspension of improvement grants.

At a special meeting of Durham's Housing Services Committee in January 1981, members considered the implications of the 1980 Housing Act for renovation grants (195). The new grant provisions were condemned by the committee, which was all-party without a Labour majority, as forcing them to accept lower housing standards while making it easier for owner-occupiers, landlords and builders to profit from the use of public money for home improvement. Both the Chief Environmental Health Officer and the City Engineer advised the committee that the new provisions would lead to deteriorating standards and serious problems in the long-term, and both officers and members were united in their criticisms of the Act.

The Labour Group fought both to frustrate council house sales forced by the 1980 Housing Act and to prevent the withdrawal of subsidy from council housing (196, 197, 198). In February 1981 a move by the Labour Group to keep rents below central government targets by increasing the Rate Fund Contribution to the Housing Revenue Account was successful (199). Nevertheless, on April 6 council rents increased on average by the £3.53 per week, a rise of 54 per cent on 1980/81, compared with an increase of 11.9 per cent in the rates (made up, however, by a 26.3 per



cent increase in the City's rate and 9.3 per cent in the County Council rate) and 15.2 per cent in the water rate. The council argued that 61 per cent of the rent increase was due to a reduction in central government subsidy, with the remainder due to high interest rates on borrowing for new build and improvements to the council stock, and the need to finance structural repairs. This was a large rent increase, but rents remained low in comparison with, for example, Tyneside authorities. Without pressure from the Labour Group, the rent increase would have been slightly higher. The increase could have been kept lower by making a greater Rate Fund Contribution, by reallocating expenditure or raising the rates. In view of the way E7 worked in the Block Grant calculations, increasing the Rate Fund Contribution further would, in Durham's case, have led to an overall withdrawal of Government grant, necessitating a rate increase or cuts in expenditure (Gibson, 1981; 200).

In March 1981 the City Architect reported to the Housing Services Committee that improvement standards for its work on the council stock might have to be lowered to keep within HIP allocations (201). The lowest tenders recently bid for five modernisation schemes were all above the budgeted amount. The committee decided that a working party would have to prepare revised contracts based on reduced specifications to achieve a cost saving of 10 per cent on each house.

Although council housing was very much a political priority for Durham City, either through the direct control of the Labour Group or its strong influence in Opposition, the authority did not encourage tenant

participation. There appeared to have been no tenants' association active in the district since at least 1974 (202). The management of council housing was very clearly the council's prerogative. The 1980 Housing Act required local authorities to work out and publish arrangements for consulting tenants about matters affecting their homes or their tenancies. Some activists in the local Labour Party saw this as an opportunity to win a role for tenants' associations and adopt a policy of encouraging their formation, as intended in Labour's 1979 Housing Bill. But at the October 1981 meeting of the Housing Services Committee any policy of encouraging tenants' associations was rejected in favour of individual written consultation and a right of appeal to the committee (203).

Durham's corporate housing management was paternalistic in other respects. In 1981 lettings still had to be approved by members rather than made automatically through a points system. In October a controversy broke out about medical priority for council housing (204). A housing applicant discovered that confidential medical and personal details were accessible to the public in the minutes of the Medical Cases Sub Committee in the city library. Included in the minutes were names and addresses and details of physical and mental illnesses, treatments, personal relationships, marital breakdowns and the custody of children. One woman was described in the minutes as "neglecting her personal upkeep" and details were included about discussions between the community physician and Social Services regarding her future (205). The council, after receiving protests from the British Medical Association and Shelter about the personal details deposited in the public library,

replied that they would be revising their minuting system to restrict the amount of information recorded. But they refused to delete details in past minutes because they had been signed as a public record of council business (206).

In November 1981 Durham City was once again faced with the prospect of having to increase council house rents substantially (207). The City Treasurer advised the council that central government was likely to assume a further rent increase in 1982/83 of about £3 per week, taking the HRA into surplus. The Leader of the Labour Group stated that this meant that since the 1979 General Election rents in Durham had risen by an average of 130 per cent for a 3 bedroom house and 155 per cent for a one bedroom bungalow. A £3 rent increase would result in a £800,000 surplus on the HRA. One of the City's three Conservative members argued that Durham's council house rents had been kept far below private sector levels by "using central government's money", but he had written to the Secretary of State calling for "fairness" in his allocations. In January 1982 the Labour Group's concern about the new housing subsidy system led to their decision to press for an extraordinary council meeting (208). The meeting instructed the Chief Executive to prepare estimates for expenditure in 1981/82 on the basis of no reductions in council services, and resolved that any forced surplus on the HRA be used to the benefit of council tenants and not to subsidise the rates, and that the level of Rate Fund Contribution to the HRA be at least maintained in 1982/83. Labour's majority at the meeting meant that the resolutions were approved.

This successful attempt to give a political lead to officers in a situation of no overall control reflected the Labour Group's clear conception of its housing policy, contrasting with the rather piecemeal and reactive actions of its varied coalition of opponents. Labour regained a clear majority in the May 1983 council elections, and it is interesting at this point to note the reflections of a senior local party figure about Labour's basically corporatist managerial style when in control of the council:

"Some new Labour councillors were elected in May, but the old guard who want to go on blustering through are still there ... With the May election many senior officers welcomed Labour's clear majority and the clear direction they now had to work with. Under the Alliance/Independents, agreement about policies sometimes changed from day to day, with internal arguments and no clear direction." (209).

But even during the years of no overall control, Labour's influence - which tended to be reinforced by the council's officers - was strong (although the Liberal-SDP alliance had a fairly firm base in the district). It is tempting to suggest, although this was not investigated directly, that a corporatist relationship existed between these two groups even though Labour did not hold power, and that this was an alliance based on state housing. For example, during 1981/82 the council suspended improvement grants, officers explaining in the council newsletter:

"The Government have recently brought in legislation to alter considerably the regulations affecting home improvement grants. The limit it is possible to claim towards necessary improvement has been greatly increased. The rules governing the payment of grants have also been relaxed. Unfortunately due to the big reduction in the

Housing Investment Allocation by the Government the City Council is not able to offer discretionary grants at the present time." (210)

The newsletter was highly critical of the effects of central government policies on housing in Durham. Although the Housing Services Committee reintroduced discretionary improvement grants for owner-occupiers for 1982/83, with extra money available largely as a result of capital receipts from council house sales, only £100,000 was allocated, despite a HIP bid for £500,000 (the total bid had been £8.3m; the allocation was £3.5m - thus grants were cut disproportionately). The Labour Group opposed the allocation, arguing that the money should be used to accelerate the council housing repairs programme, especially as rents were increasing so dramatically and much of the increased budget was a consequence of council house sales. But it was defended by the chair of the Housing Committee, an Independent councillor for Framwellgate Moor:

"Coun. Jeff Lodge, chairman, commented that if they could save a house anywhere, they were saving a house for the city." (210)

At the March 1982 meeting of the full council the Labour Group again moved to increase the Rate Fund Contribution to the HRA, but failed by one vote (211). An attempt to delete from the estimates the £100,000 for improvement grants and add £500,000 for repairs to the council stock also failed. The end result was that while the city rate would increase by 17.5 per cent (which would be reduced to approximately 10 per cent overall when combined with the decision of the more conservative Labour controlled County Council), council house rents would increase by 26 per cent.

Durham City's 1982/83 HIP statement argued that reductions in HIP allocations meant fewer or no improvement grants or loans, "to the effect that deterioration of property will increase" (212). It notes the need for environmental improvements in some areas and although no direct reference is made to Old Framwellgate Moor the description of possible improvements - making up roads, landscaping and off-street car parking - related closely to the area, but the statement made no bid under this heading. However a bid for £600,000 was made for "Advances for Purchase and/or Improvement Works". This was very optimistic in view of DOE Circular 13/81 which indicated very strongly that the acquisition, improvement and slum clearance block of HIP allocations would, along with the new build block, be substantially reduced (213). A bid for £50,000 "initial finance" was made for acquisitions at Framwellgate Moor. What appears as a rather weak justification, more appropriate to the "modernisation era", was made:

"This area is also within 3 miles of the City Centre and is the subject of a study at the present time. The area under consideration adjoins what is otherwise a thriving community, with all facilities. There are 111 dwellings in tight terraces, all over 100 years old. The physical condition of the properties is such that no improvement grants have been available for several years. Drainage is obsolete and open-jointed in places. Most of the narrow streets are unmade. There is much derelict former garden land adjacent to the dwellings." (214)

In May 1983 Labour won an overall majority of five on the council. Its manifesto had contained a radical departure from previous policy in making an explicit commitment to consult with tenants' associations and to decentralise housing management. But the housing section of the manifesto made no reference to policies for the private sector. It

spelt out a detailed programme for council housing, taking up half of the document. No mention was made of the Right to Buy. The Party was clearly going for its traditional vote in the council estates, and won.

The Labour Group viewed the private sector as in competition with council housing for funds. There was an attitude that owner-occupiers could look after themselves. Councillors took the view that substandard private housing should not attract council cash, particularly in a time of financial restraint. Such housing should ultimately be cleared. This was a traditional Labour Party position on working class housing, but one that effectively excluded many working class owner-occupiers and private tenants. However, much of the "substandard" nineteenth century stock in the district, mainly in the old industrial villages, had been demolished and very few areas of unfit houses remained, making area redevelopment of the type Derwentside had intended for Railway Street (chapter 5) generally inappropriate. Instead, when it was considered necessary individual houses were deemed substandard and mortgages and renovation grants withdrawn, obviously making the chances of unfitness much greater. By purchasing such properties on the market (in accordance with central government guidelines on non-statutory blight) Durham City avoided going to public inquiry even when, as in the case of Framwellgate Moor, the strategy was essentially area-based.

## 6.2 Housing conflict in Old Framwellgate Moor: the defence of private housing

Framwellgate Moor is about three miles from the centre of Durham City on the former A1 road which links Durham with Chester-le-Street. The area was part of Durham Rural District until its inclusion in an enlarged Durham City authority after local government reorganisation in 1974. Old Framwellgate Moor lies on one side of the old A1, while a council housing estate lies on the opposite side. Newton Hall, a large private housing estate built in the 1960s to cater for the growth of the city's service sector, also forms part of Framwellgate Moor.

In October 1980 Old Frawellgate Moor comprised 111 dwellings in close terraces with mostly unmade narrow streets. They were built as single storey miners' cottages in the first half of the nineteenth century by the Framwellgate Moor Colliery Company owned by the Londonderry family (215). The mine closed in 1924 and in the 1930s the colliery company began to sell off the cottages. Many of the mining families left in search of work outside the area, although some may have been rehoused in the nearby council estate which was started in 1935. Most of the cottages were bought as a speculative investment by a local greengrocer. He extended their size by building second storeys, joining together adjacent units or building rear extensions. They were then sold to owner-occupiers or private landlords.

After the Second World War many families from Old Framwellgate Moor were rehoused in the council estate where building continued into the 1950s



to cater for the city's growth. The Labour-controlled Rural District Council proposed eventually to clear all of the area's older housing and totally "modernise" the stock (216). Meanwhile, individual owner-occupiers were making improvements to these old houses and by 1969 Old Framwellgate Moor had a mix of house types: small single and two-storey cottages, stone-built detached houses and brick-built bungalows. The dominant form, however, was terraced housing. While the 1959 House Purchase and Housing Act introduced standard grants based on bringing houses with at least a fifteen-year life up to a five-point standard, the Rural District Council did not consider the dwellings in Old Framwellgate Moor capable of improvement to the necessary fifteen-year life. Owner-occupiers had to improve their homes with their own resources. The 1969 Housing Act, however, substantially raised the level of grants for rehabilitation and with the 1974 Housing Act the newly-created Durham City Council made available renovation grants to Old Framwellgate Moor, which were taken up by some of the residents.

In 1977, in the new national climate of economic crisis and cuts in public expenditure, Durham City's Environmental Health Department undertook an inspection of the district's housing stock in accordance with the requirements of the 1969 and 1974 Housing Acts. As in Langley Park, this was carried out without consultation with residents. On 7 March the City Architect, City Engineer, City Environmental Health Officer and City Planning Officer jointly presented the council's Housing Services Committee with a brief report on the eligibility of certain areas in the district for renovation grants. The report noted that in some streets the council had imposed a time limit on grant

applications, mainly because the future of these areas was uncertain. The officers now wished to remove this uncertainty by deciding on the expected life of these properties to determine eligibility for grant aid. These "lifing" decisions were a means of rationing the council's resources.

It was recommended that improvement grants be made available for all houses with an assured life of at least 30 years, intermediate grants for houses with a life of at least 15 years and no grants for houses with "an uncertain life". The report advised that almost all of the properties in Old Framwellgate Moor - with the main exception of North Terrace - be regarded as having lives of less than 15 years and consequently should receive no further grants.

The Housing Services Committee decided to defer any decision on the officers' recommendations until they had seen a further report detailing conditions in each of the streets concerned. This was presented to the Committee on 13 June (217). It contained information from a street-by-street survey of housing conditions and re-iterated the recommendations officers made in March. The report was very brief, with the condition of each street being described in 100-200 words. Just under half of the dwellings were only subject to an external inspection. The basic shells were sound. Only 19 of the 155 dwellings inspected were considered unfit. In addition, 55 houses had received Intermediate grants since 1974. The recommendation for terrace after terrace that "no further grants be made" was supported by such statements as:

"There is some dampness and disrepair ... it is doubtful if they could be made to provide viable units of accommodation ... six of the properties have or appear to have internal facilities ... there is a lack of space to facilitate full scale improvement ... there is a considerable number of old persons in the street ... dampness is evident in some properties and repair varies from good to poor ... all have evidence of rising dampness although in the majority of cases it is not yet so extensive as to cause the houses to be unfit ... Of the twenty-eight properties in the block only fifteen were inspected of which eleven had the use of internal facilities, although some were not satisfactorily arranged internally." (218; stress added)

This apparent prejudice against older private housing (*compare with the* priority given to improving pre-war council houses) was accepted by the Housing Services Committee, which approved the report's recommendation that most of the houses in Old Framwellgate Moor would no longer be eligible for improvement grants. They were condemned ultimately to clearance. In addition to adopting the no grants policy, the council decided to serve demolition orders on Nos. 4-9 South Terrace under Part II, Section 16 of the 1957 Housing Act. The owners decided against appealing to the County Court. One local observer commented that:

"... the attitude of the owners seemed to be that whilst they wished to remain in the houses, the council had made up their minds and there was no point in an appeal." (219)

The 1957 Housing Act does not require the local authority to inform anyone about a demolition order other than those residents with an interest in the land and property directly affected. Together with the decision to withdraw grants, the decision to demolish one of the terraces in Old Framwellgate Moor served to heighten local residents' feelings of insecurity.

The council's decision about grants only became known locally when an unemployed owner-occupier in Newcastle Terrace approached the council about the eligibility of his house for an improvement grant. He was told of the recent decision to withhold grants and draw up a plan for the redevelopment of Framwellgate Moor, and soon realised that the effect of no further grants would be that local housing conditions would deteriorate and the exchange values of the houses would collapse as they became uninhabitable. He circulated a letter to all the 84 houses in the area, informing residents of the council's decision to demolish most of South Terrace and stop improvement grants for almost the whole of Old Framwellgate Moor. The letter announced a public meeting. Fifty-seven people attended the meeting in the local community centre on 28 July 1977. After a long discussion, it was decided to form a committee and draw up a constitution for a residents' association. Community Service for County Durham's Countryside Officer and the local Independent councillor were co-opted onto the committee.

Two days later the committee sent a letter together with a 100-signature petition to the council's Chief Executive communicating the unanimous resolutions adopted at the public meeting (220). These included calling for the re-introduction of renovation grants, the lifting of the demolition orders on South Terrace and consideration to be given to a GIA for the area. At the meeting many residents objected to the way the council's decision had been made on the basis of a very superficial survey carried out with no consultation. The residents decided to undertake their own survey and work on full plans and costings for improvements, arguing that these would be less costly than rehousing

which seemed to be the inevitable result of the council's actions. An appeal was made for technical help.

A second meeting was called for a fortnight's time. The newly-formed Old Framwellgate Moor Residents' Association (OFMRA) invited a council officer to the meeting to answer residents' questions. The Chief Executive's reply was that the matter would be "brought to the notice of my council after the August recess" (221). This was not acceptable to OFMRA. On 20 August they wrote to the Labour Party chair of the Housing Services Committee requesting a meeting (222). The letter also asked for an explanation of the decision about no further grants in the light of central government policy which placed an emphasis on improving older private housing. OFMRA had to wait until 22 September before receiving a reply from the Committee chairperson, who refused to meet the group (223).

Excluded from local council decision-making about their future, on 22 August OFMRA wrote to the local Labour MP stating their case (224). He met the group on 23 September, but said that he was unable to intervene on the residents' behalf and advised that they should secure legal assistance. In order to establish relations with the council, OFMRA invited the 33 members of the Housing Services Committee to an "open day" on 8 October. Only one (Liberal Party) councillor turned up. It was at this stage that OFMRA began to feel that letter writing and petitions were getting them nowhere and decided to organise a publicity campaign against the council. They also obtained legal and architectural assistance, the latter on a voluntary basis from an

architect working with Tyneside Environmental Concern. His first action was to write to the council's Chief Environmental Health Officer requesting a meeting to inspect South Terrace and consider what repairs would save the houses from demolition (225). Although acknowledged on 28 October, it appears that this letter was not brought to the attention of the Environmental Health Committee, who at their meeting on 8 November decided to adhere to their decision to demolish the South Terrace houses. Frustrated by this continuing exclusion, OFMRA decided to organise a demonstration at the full council meeting on 28 November which had to ratify the Environmental Health Committee's action.

The publicity campaign got national results. On 7 November The Guardian published an article by Judy Hillman on "Life in a scrapheap village: future indefinite, present imperfect". The following week OFMRA's architect wrote to The Guardian about its struggle, emphasising its significance as part of a wider struggle against modernism:

"The state of affairs at Framwellgate village ... is not uncommon in the North-east. Tyneside Environmental Concern has been asked to help a number of groups of owner/occupiers and tenants who have been subjected to similar forms of blight. In New Kyo, a pit village of 511 flats and houses (70 per cent owner-occupied), the Derwentside District Council has employed the same tactics as Durham City. In this case the decline has been in process for some years, and despite vigorous efforts by the residents' association to change the situation - including a clear and well-presented report calling for the designation of the village as a General Improvement Area - the blight prevails. The prophecy of the local environmental health officer approaches self-fulfillment as houses change hands at a fraction of the price they would fetch in normal circumstances. It is not simply the absence of grants that so depresses the area - most of the owner-occupied dwellings have been improved without grants - it is the sentence of death that is implicit in the council's formal decision to stop all grants." (226)

In fact, in 1976 Durham City Council's planning office had prepared plans to make Old Framwellgate Moor a General Improvement Area, in line with national policy developments (227). However these were abandoned before being brought to the attention of the council. Instead the Environmental Health Department's recommendation to demolish some of the houses in the area and stop renovation grants to most of the remainder was put forward by the officers and adopted by the council in the climate of financial cut-backs. While in March 1976 the Planning Department had considered that some of the houses had a thirty year life, by June they had been given a life of less than fifteen years and thus excluded from grant aid.

There are a number of points to be made about this situation. Firstly, there appeared to be a different approach to older housing areas between the Planning Department and the Environmental Health Department. Secondly, a bias towards demolition and council re-housing among older Labour councillors was evident. Thirdly, while planning decisions involved various statutory obligations to consult and involve the public, housing management and environmental health decisions did not (although this changed in the case of the former as a result of the 1980 Housing Act). Fourthly, the decision on the life of the houses and hence eligibility for grants appeared to be tied to central government restrictions on local public housing expenditure which began in 1976. Thus "lifing", which was determining the future of a whole neighbourhood, seemed to be far from an objective exercise, but one which depended on the policy environment and the wider forces which shaped this.

Decisions made by the Environmental Health and Housing Departments obviously had long-term consequences for Old Framwellgate Moor. But OFMRA found that formal openings for appeal were very limited. As in Derwentside, the corporatist management style of the council excluded organised groups as well as the disorganised. There was no recourse to a public inquiry when the council decided to clear individual unfit houses in South Terrace through demolition orders. There were no legal grounds for appealing against the lifting decisions and the removal of grants. It seemed impossible to influence the Labour Group on the council. While the local Independent councillor supported the residents' case, the local ward Labour councillor (who subsequently lost his seat) refused to support it apparently because of the Labour Group's decision. Since the residents had no right to speak directly at council meetings they had to rely on an Opposition councillor to put their case - however inadequately - or protest directly.

With advice from the voluntary organisation Community Service for County Durham, OFMRA decided on a strategy of drawing up their own plans for Old Framwellgate Moor as they were excluded from negotiating with the council. OFMRA's first priority, however, was to save South Terrace from demolition. In November 1977 their architect and a local unemployed builder carried out a structural survey of the Terrace. They concluded that the cottages were sound and could be improved "at modest cost" to a life in excess of 30 years. On 25 November the architect wrote to the council's Environmental Health Officer requesting a meeting to discuss the defects in the houses (228). OFMRA's solicitor also wrote to the Chief Executive and the Department of the Environment



requesting suspension of the demolition orders because the owners had agreed to repair the cottages (229). The decision to demolish was to be considered at a full council meeting on 28 November. Forty residents turned up to demonstrate, ranging from "80 year old couples who have lived in the area all their life, to middle aged couples, young marrieds and individual younger tenants" (230).

At the meeting the local Independent councillor moved that the matter be put back to the Environmental Health Committee for reconsideration, with any decision deferred until the residents had produced their report stating the case for a GIA (231). This motion was supported by all the Liberals and most of the Independent councillors, but went down by 21 votes to 29 under the weight of the Labour Group vote. The decision was met by slow hand-clapping by local residents, leading to their ejection from the council chamber by the police. The Labour Deputy Mayor commented to a reporter:

"I don't think they helped their case. Coun. Lodge (Independent councillor for Framwellgate Moor) could have put their views, but the opportunity was missed ... I haven't seen the houses myself, but we make these decisions on the advice of our officials, who have. I cannot say at this stage what action will be taken when the residents' plans are submitted." (232; parenthesis added)

During their campaign OFMRA also worked generally to improve the neighbourhood, including pressing for the provision of litter bins and a children's play area, undertaking a "clean-up weekend" and planning a landscaping project. This was a similar strategy to create an active community as was pursued by the Railway Street Association in Langley

Park (chapter 5). Their main concern was that no further decisions should be taken about the future of Framwellgate Moor until they had produced their report on the case for a GIA. On 6 February 1978 the Housing Services Committee discussed the matter and reaffirmed their earlier decisions to demolish 6 houses in South Terrace and stop grants (233). They agreed to consider the residents' report but ultimate clearance was envisaged and houses offered by their owners would be purchased by the council.

OFMRA's draft report was discussed at a General Meeting on 13 March 1978 and on 10 May the final report was circulated to their solicitors, the Chief Executive of Durham City Council, OFMRA's architect, the media, the public library and the Parish Council. With the aid of survey results, plans, designs and costings, the report - The Improvement Potential of Old Framwellgate Moor - made the case for improving the area as a GIA in the spirit of the 1974 Housing Act (234). It revealed that 77 of the 116 dwellings in the area had all five standard amenities and twelve had central heating. Forty-seven standard grants and two discretionary grants had been taken up between 1957 and 1977, with 28 improvements financed privately. The physical survey showed the houses to be in "very good" structural condition. The household questionnaire revealed the convenient location of the area and a relatively young age structure. The improvements that residents wanted to see were to make up the roads, to tidy up the area, to introduce play streets and to introduce controls to stop non-residents using the streets as car parks. Only 9 of the 111 households which responded suggested the re-introduction of renovation grants. The report concluded:

"Old Framwellgate Moor has every amenity within reach; it has a wonderful community spirit; it has strong houses that are well-worth preserving. Unfortunately it lacks made-up roads and has an abundance of unused land which gives it an overall untidiness at the moment. But these are surface faults and it takes little imagination to show what could be made of the village. This report outlines our ideas for the future improvement of our village which we hope will be accepted and expanded upon by the officers and members of the local authority." (235)

As in the case of Railway Street, the neighbourhood met many of the needs of its residents in the early 1980s when cheap solid fuel heated housing and convenient facilities were assets lacking in many modern council estates. Arguably, the struggle for Old Framwellgate Moor, as in Railway Street, was a post-modern "survival strategy", defending environments that offered more use values and possibilities for informal activity and self-provisioning than the large areas of mass housing built during the modern phase (see Mingione, 1983).

The defence of Old Framwellgate Moor involved a high level of self-activity among the residents aimed at demonstrating the viability of the area. OFMRA made a detailed criticism of the council officers' report of June 1977 (236). They countered the vagueness of the report with figures from their own questionnaire survey and architects' report on internal facilities, structure, willingness to improve and social and demographic composition. The survey revealed that Old Framwellgate Moor comprised 116 households. Sixty five per cent of the 75 properties were owner-occupied, 19 per cent were tenanted and the remaining 14 per cent were empty. The report stated:

"... the Association finds it impossible to understand how the points given in the survey report led to the opinion that these

properties had less than a fifteen year life expectancy and would therefore be ineligible for grants. Almost all have the basic amenities and also have large gardens, thus making them able to be extended. No evidence is given of the extent of dampness or disrepair and the Association is of the opinion that these problems are not on a major scale, nor are they unable to be remedied at relatively little cost. Moreover, the houses are basically sound ... the style of this report paints the worst possible picture of the area ... if the present blight continues for a long period, people may well become reluctant to do repairs and houses will deteriorate." (237; emphasis added)

On 22 January 1979 the local Labour MP wrote to OFMRA explaining that on 2 December the council's Housing Services Committee had discussed an Action Area Plan drawn up by the City Planning Officer which included part of Framwellgate Moor (238). The Plan, however, would include some demolition and would largely be based on a detailed survey to be carried out by the Environmental Health Officer over December and January. On 26 February the Chief Executive wrote to inform OFMRA that the Action Area Plan would not be available to the public until June (239). There was to be no consultation about the Plan. In July the local Independent councillor told OFMRA that the Environmental Health Officer's survey had found only three houses in Old Framwellgate Moor to be unfit. It wrote to the Environmental Health Officer requesting further information about the survey. In a reply dated 11 July he stated that the survey report had to remain confidential until it had been seen by the council (240). It was only one of a number of factors that had to be taken into account: the City Architect was to carry out a structural survey, and all the results were to be included in a report by the City Planning Officer.

OFMRA wrote to the local Labour MP, the local councillors and the Prime Minister requesting help in obtaining a copy of the Environmental Health Officer's survey report. In September OFMRA was eventually informed that the survey found 3 houses to be unfit, 47 fit and 27 "substandard". OFMRA continued to press for the production of the County Planning Officer's Action Area Plan, which by 1980 the council was terming the Redevelopment Outline Plan.

### 6.3 Waiting it out

"(T)he government ... had time and resources on their side and the process of decline was accelerating all the time ... It is difficult for a local group to maintain support and credibility over a long period with few obvious achievements." (Redpath, 1980, p. 160)

The above quote from Redpath's account of the attempt to save the Shankill Road in Belfast from redevelopment is a good introduction to the next phase of community action in Old Framwellgate Moor. During 1980 attendance at OFMRA committee meetings dwindled and much of the work fell upon its chairperson, a self-employed jobbing builder. However local support for the residents' association remained strong, and the chairperson stated that there were good turn-outs at important public meetings (241). He saw his work during a long period of non-decision making by the council as something of a hobby. He kept up a steady exchange of correspondence with council officers, the Environmental Health Officers Association, the Medical Research Council, Shelter and the Department of the Environment. In particular, he contested the argument that conditions in Old Framwellgate Moor were

injurious to health, which provided the council with the "excuse" to intervene in the area (see chapter 2). The main interest of the majority of the residents was for "the council to leave them alone". There was little support for the idea of housing association involvement or a housing co-operative, in contrast to Railway Street in Langley Park. Most people preferred to spend their own money on their own houses, which had sound basic shells. But many now appeared to be resigned to their fate and ready to sell to the council and move to a more secure area. There was little support for practical initiatives; plans for a Manpower Services Commission scheme to improve the area had met with no support from local residents, who would have had to pay for materials and machine hire.

Uncertainty continued to hang over Old Framwellgate Moor. On 4 August the Environmental Health Officer informed OFMRA that the policy of no improvement grants would remain at least until the City Planning Officer's "study exercise" was submitted to the council for their decision (242). On 7 August the City Engineer informed OFMRA that due to legal and practical difficulties, together with the possibility of prejudicing the Action Area Plan, the council had to reject OFMRA's plans for environmental improvements to the area (243). Following information from the local Independent councillor that the council was to meet with regional officials from the Department of the Environment on 14 October to discuss various housing matters, including Framwellgate Moor, OFMRA's chairperson wrote to the Department on 3 October stating that Durham City Council intended to demolish houses it had not surveyed structurally, that many residents did not want to be moved to council

houses and that the Environmental Health Officer's survey was now out of date (244). He enclosed a copy of their architect's structural survey. The Department of the Environment did approve some money for spending on acquisition, but this was suspended as a result of central government's moratorium on housing expenditure that year.

On 29 November 1980 John Stanley, the Conservative Government's Minister for Housing, attended a public meeting on the "Right to Buy" in Durham Town Hall. A few Framwellgate Moor residents attended and asked Stanley about the government's policy towards older housing such as that in Framwellgate Moor. He stated that he could not answer detailed points, but invited a letter. OFMRA's new chairperson, a local school teacher, wrote to Stanley on 1 December pointing out that Durham City Council's policy of buying up houses that were sound and demolishing them did not make commercial sense. The letter was sympathetically received, but again it was stated that no mechanism yet existed for central government to intervene in the locality.

The lobbying continued until a final decision was made by the Housing Services Committee at its meeting on 14 September 1981 (245). The committee considered a report of the Officers' Management Team on Old Framwellgate Moor and resolved to confirm the existing policy of no discretionary grants and no mortgages, and to achieve the partial clearance and redevelopment of 86 properties under Part II or Part III of the 1957 Housing Act. Twenty-four properties in North Terrace were made eligible for discretionary renovation grants and mortgages "as and when HIP monies can be made available". The committee also resolved to

request the Development Services Committee to instruct the City Planning Officer to prepare a local plan in due course for the future of Old Framwellgate Moor as a whole and to request the City Secretary to inform the residents' association of their decisions. The residents were informed by written circular on 14 October, explaining that the suspension of renovation grants would continue and that ultimate clearance and redevelopment of the area was envisaged, but current central government policy prevented this at the present time (246). Residents were invited to offer their houses for sale to the council.

This decision re-energised the residents' association, which had been at a low ebb over the previous year. It wrote to all the city councillors stating that the substantial majority of people who owned and lived in the 86 houses affected did not want them demolished (247). The letter demanded that the council withdraw plans to purchase and clear the houses and threatened a campaign against it "similar to the campaign against the leisure centre", which had generated considerable and successful opposition to the council in the late 1970s. The letter stated that a recent questionnaire showed widespread support for such a campaign and criticised the council's arguments for clearance. After four years of communications the time had come for such action, with maximum publicity. The letter concluded:

"Finally would you please note that we would regret having to launch a campaign against the council, but what else do you expect us to do? Also please do not take this as a personal attack on any councillor or officer. We see it as an attack on the system, a system which was no doubt suitable for ridding us of the worst back to back housing of the 1930s, but which is now out of date. One example of this is the 1957 Housing Act which the Development Services Committee proposed using in its recent resolution. This



would seem to require the council to show that the 'arrangement of the streets and houses' pose a health hazard. Perhaps the narrow back streets of fifty years ago were such a hazard; but in the 1980s in Framwellgate Moor where there is about fifteen yards between each row of houses, where everyone has a refrigerator and the number of people per house is a fraction of what it used to be, any idea of a health hazard is just not on.

Please vote for what the people of Old Framwellgate Moor want."  
(248)

At a meeting of OFMRA in October, attended by 20 residents, it was decided to re-introduce regular monthly meetings and raise subscriptions to £1 a month for those prepared to pay it. A further letter was sent to all city councillors arguing that the houses were sound, offered relatively cheap and basic accommodation and were being blighted (249). OFMRA questioned the council's view that full scale improvement would cost about £10,000 per house, equal to the cost of redevelopment. The letter stated that "even if these figures are correct, which we deny, the above are not the only two alternatives. There is a third: just leave us alone". It continued:

"The correspondence file of communications between this association and the council and others has grown to about three inches thick over the last four years. We have decided that the council is playing for time, which may well be its best course of action. But this is not getting the people of Framwellgate Moor anywhere. Hence our campaign."

Labour lost control of Durham City Council in May 1980. OFMRA were not now dealing with the "Labour Party machine" and in fact their local Independent councillor became the chair of the Housing Services Committee. Following lobbying, he and other councillors agreed to a meeting with the residents' association in January 1982. OFMRA's

December newsletter argued that the council resolution to clear 86 houses under the 1957 Housing Act was a device to obtain central government approval to acquire the houses when there were not enough funds to clear them in the immediate future (250).

OFMRA was suspicious that the council was attempting to buy up the area so that they could demolish fit houses without opposition and redevelop a site with potential for housing or commercial development. This was made all the easier as building societies would not lend on the properties while the council's policy remained as it was (251). At the December meeting of the Housing Services Committee, for example, it was decided to purchase two houses in Old Framwellgate Moor (252). OFMRA's newsletter also pointed out that there was a lack of re-lets in nearby council housing because of its popular location so there was a risk of displaced residents being rehoused in less popular and convenient estates, and having to pay much more for their housing when there was a possibility that some residents would be excluded from state assistance with the rent because of the money they would receive from the sale of their homes in Framwellgate Moor.

On January 28, 1982 a packed public meeting was chaired by the chair of the council's Housing Services Committee in Framwellgate Moor Community Centre (253). The housing officer explained to the residents the background to the current situation: the decision to withdraw grants had been taken in 1977 and to acquire houses in the area in 1978. In September 1981 the Housing Services Committee decided on partial clearance under Parts II and III of the 1957 Housing Act, with

improvement of the neighbourhood and some replacement housing as the ultimate aim. The council would buy up houses at their market value. The Environmental Health Officer stated that the majority of the houses were technically fit but were "nearing the end of their lives" and were to have a further inspection. There were interjections from the audience at this stage about the lack of detail involved in these inspections.

A spokesperson for the residents' association argued that the officers' report to the council in 1977 made no reference to any structural problems. The 1979 Environmental Health Officers report contained no evidence to deny a 30 year life. Being short of money was not a good reason for the council to pull down the houses; local people just wanted the council to leave them alone. A 30 year life would enable local residents to apply to the Housing Corporation for funds to improve the houses.

OFMRA's volunteer architect argued that the houses were structurally sound although visually not all that appealing. Local residents had shown a great deal of initiative and many had carried out work to their homes. The council had made "brusque and superficial decisions" that were "paternalistic and authoritarian".

The City Architect replied that the houses were very old and two (sic) of them were in unsatisfactory structural condition. The residents had refused full inspections of their houses (but this was disputed by the residents). The housing officer stated that "the council won't touch

the houses as long as they are fit". No decision had been taken either way about the lives of the dwellings.

Several residents argued that there was a market demand for the houses and they were quite content to be left to the housing market. The council was preventing this by blighting the area with its policy of no grants and no mortgages - even if none of these were wanted. There was no point in clearing the houses, the council did not have the money and they were not unfit.

In a remarkably candid contribution, the City Planner stated that if the council was unable to acquire the properties, there would be no clearance action. If compulsory purchase was used residents would have the right to a public inquiry which, as had happened in Railway Street, they were very likely to win. Framwellgate Moor was the only area of the city where the council had a house purchase policy. It was aware that its previous decisions meant that no building society mortgages were available, and had therefore resolved to purchase the houses as they came onto the market.

The chair concluded the meeting by inviting OFMRA to make recommendations on the future of the area to the Housing Services Committee, including if they wished the proposal that a 30 year life be declared.

It is significant that it had to wait until Labour had lost control of the council before such a public meeting could take place. The meeting

convinced residents that their main objective now was to get the council to give the houses a 30 year life so that the few remaining unfit houses would be eligible for improvement grants, housing credit could be restored for the area, an unimpeded housing market re-established and the area given a more secure future. While there was little interest among residents in a housing co-operative, they decided that if they informed the council that it was their intention to form a co-op and seek Housing Corporation funds they might be successful in getting a 30 year life declared for the properties (254). OFMRA's secretary wrote to the council requesting the removal of any declaration of a limited life for the houses and, following an invitation, Banks of the Wear Cooperative Housing Services visited the area in March to discuss the possibility of a housing co-operative (255).

By 1984 the council had bought up over a quarter of the 86 properties of Old Framwellgate Moor during the past three years (256). There was a strong feeling among residents that this was a bid to clear the area without resorting to compulsory purchase and a public inquiry, and that the council was blighting the area without producing any definite plan for its future. OFMRA's secretary commented to a local newspaper:

"... in the case of the houses in Framwellgate Moor, Building Societies and Bank surveyors are evidently prepared to put money into the houses; people are prepared to buy them and maintain them. It is hard to see the case for the Council meddling in the area."  
(257)

#### 6.4 Summary and conclusions

There are many similarities between the present case study and previous studies. The local Labour Party had a long history of a commitment to council housing and the eradication of old "substandard" housing. This continued into the years when many working class people preferred to own their own homes, a decision in which the failures of mass state housing during the modernisation era played a significant part as well as the obvious financial attractions for waged households. It also continued beyond the end of slum housing to be applied to "near slums" in which people wanted to continue living and where exchange values reflected this. Durham City Council remained committed to a modernist housing policy despite the transition in national policy to recommodification and the retention of the older private housing stock. Its intervention in the civil society of Old Framwellgate Moor led to a reaction among residents who had seen their views about the use value of the houses reflected in the houses' exchange values until the council blighted the area. Removing this blight would leave the owners with relatively attractive investments.

In the case of Old Framwellgate Moor, however, the council could not secure the resources from central government to carry out redevelopment and it was an example of what Stewart (1982) has identified as bureaucratic procedure outstripping financial capacity. This situation was a product of central government's crack-down on local expenditure on capital schemes. Amid this, the council avoided a public inquiry by acquiring properties on the market rather than using compulsory

purchase, which would have been very difficult to justify as few of the houses were unfit. It did not improve the houses it purchased in Old Framwellgate Moor, but bricked them up or rented them out after basic repairs. Durham City pursued a policy that appeared to hope for a change in central government policy and eventually the resources for demolition and selective rebuilding, perhaps under a second phase of modernisation. Central government policy in the 1980s was to retain older private housing such as that at Old Framwellgate Moor and encourage its improvement in stages as owners could afford it, letting the housing market continue to operate. The older Labour councillors in Durham, however, were still committed to the modernist clean-sweep approach to the replacement of these old terraces.

At the Examination in Public of the Durham County Structure Plan, Durham City Council pressed for an upward revision of the County Council's population target for 1991 for the City, arguing that people and jobs continued to be attracted and that major land releases were called for (258). The Secretary of State agreed with the Panel's recommendation that the traditional character of the city had to be preserved and that there should be no further major releases of housing land in the central area. This was likely to add to the potential exchange value of the houses in Old Framwellgate Moor and the attractiveness of physical improvements to them or even - possibly - private redevelopment.

Durham City Council would not accept that Old Framwellgate Moor could be transformed into "modern" housing without public redevelopment, which throughout the modernisation era in County Durham had been the vehicle

for such transformations. Yet market processes were likely to produce investment in improving the houses. In Railway Street the "early post-modern" bias towards retaining and improving older private housing had been used by local residents to win quite substantial financial underpinning by the state for their alternative to redevelopment. The public inquiry meant they planned this alternative in some detail. In Old Framwellgate Moor residents were more interested in returning to the status quo. There was no public inquiry, but in fact the council was forced to retreat. Durham City Council's new build continued to be largely restricted to old persons dwellings, including some infill in Old Framwellgate Moor. Building for general needs occurred, on a significant scale on land near Newton Hall, but in the private sector. In the end financial pressures forced the council to sell back into the private sector most of the houses it had acquired in Old Framwellgate Moor (258). Renovation grants were made available, but on a limited scale due to lack of funds, and Old Framwellgate Moor was not high on the council's list of priorities for resources when it failed to return Labour candidates in local elections. The council itself entered a period in financial crisis after the 1987 General Election, its efforts to keep council rents down and supplement massively reduced HIP allocations having been based on hopes for a Labour Party victory nationally which did not materialise.

Despite their different histories, the two case studies of Railway Street and Old Framwellgate Moor illustrate, at one level, the determining role of the "nationalization of housing policy" in local struggles about housing. The accounts have attempted to show how these



changes were experienced by people opposing "modernisation" at very local levels. In the struggle against modernisation, the 1980s saw the means of realising these projects to some degree become available as central government attempted to expand circulation and the availability of means of self-help in its strategy for restructuring reproduction in ways that would strengthen markets rather than displace them. It was argued in chapters 1 and 2 that housing and planning policies applied throughout the country by central governments have had a "logic" which follows from their nature as strategic interventions to support changing regimes of accumulation within limits set by legitimation needs. What emerges from these two case studies, and indeed the studies of Category "D", Bessemer Park and Peterlee, is the extent to which central control had to be extended, through various mechanisms, to achieve the end of "modernisation" as it continued in the housing and planning policies of local councils in County Durham.

## CHAPTER 7

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN NORTH ARMAGH

This chapter and chapter 8 are accounts of community action about housing in North Armagh, an area of Northern Ireland which was at the centre of a regional modernisation strategy during the 1960s. This entailed large-scale spatial restructuring and the creation of the new town of Craigavon.

Previous chapters have located community action about housing in County Durham in the context of modernising and early post-modern planning and housing strategies, analysing this action in terms of struggle in civil society against modernisation. As discussed in chapter 1, North Armagh was selected as a comparative case study area for two inter-related reasons. Firstly, North Armagh was subject to similar modernisation and spatial restructuring policies as County Durham and there was sporadic community action about housing issues associated with these policies (see chapter 2). Secondly, civil society in Northern Ireland is different from County Durham, most notably in terms of sectarian divisions and the insignificant influence of Labourism. In chapter 2 it was argued that despite the absence of a social democratic hegemony, corporatist modernisation was pursued during the 1960s by the Unionist statelet, and for similar reasons regarding the needs of capital and the management of class struggle to North East England. However, having conceptualised community action as struggle in civil society in chapter 1, and the locality as an important "experiential sphere", is it

possible to locate the generative mechanisms of community action about housing in North Armagh and County Durham in terms of modernisation as, in the final analysis, a capitalist strategy, treating the apparent differences in civil society as contingent factors?

This problem is investigated in the present chapter, which examines the spatial impact of the development of Craigavon and the community action response, and chapter 8, which examines community action in the new town itself.

#### 7.1 The creation of a modern city

"Welcome to the home of your dreams!" (graffiti on a vandalised and boarded up house in Craigavon, 1982).

By the early 1960s Northern Ireland's Unionist administration for the most part accepted the need for regional planning to modernise the province's physical infrastructure in the face of international competition for capital and jobs. With local capital declining in the face of international competition and the dominance of markets by transnationals, a new managerial/commercial/middle class Unionist coalition emerged (Parson, 1980; Wiener, 1980; see also chapter 2). Its position could be enhanced by regional planning; at the same time such planning could be introduced as a reform.

The first major step was the Matthew Report (Matthew, 1963), confined by Stormont's terms of reference to drawing up planning proposals to

facilitate the modernisation of the Belfast sub-region, the economic hub and protestant heartland of Northern Ireland. In essence, Matthew proposed expanding "growth points" within the Belfast sub-region, while reducing the concentration of people and employment in the Belfast urban area itself. His work disregarded the causes and implications of sectarian division in Northern Ireland (O'Dowd, Tomlinson and Rolston, 1980, pp. 30-67; Allen, 1981). Matthew's main recommendation was, in line with modernisation strategy in peripheral regions of Britain, that a new "regional city" in the North of County Armagh should be built to attract firms from Britain, Europe and the United States, alleviate housing and traffic pressures on Belfast and form a service centre for the South and West of the province. The Report states:

"It is proposed that the existing towns of Lurgan and Portadown be expanded into a substantial new city of approximately 100,000 people, this being the most important single new development suggested in the Plan ... The proposal, which it is important to regard as of first priority, is to create a major new urban area for administration, industry, marketing, technical education and recreational activities. It presents an opportunity to create a contemporary urban environment of high quality, which could serve as a major symbol of regeneration within Northern Ireland." (Matthew, 1963, pp. 29-30)

Matthew's strategy was endorsed by the Wilson Report on economic development in Northern Ireland (Wilson, 1965). Craigavon was to be a major new "growth centre" developed between the old plantation towns of Lurgan and Portadown. These were linen centres which from the early 1950s had been experiencing sharply contracting employment. Matthew justified the recommendation on technocratic grounds: proximity to Belfast, existing transportation routes with potential for expansion,

land availability and existing urban centres (Matthew, 1963). The development of the new town, and the implementation of other elements of the Matthew Plan, involved new corporatist state agencies "above" local clientelism and committed to technocratic modernisation in the face of opposition from local councils and the small communities and farmers affected by restrictions on development outside the new growth centre, and the compulsory purchase of their land for development within it. Although based on the importation of social democratic-style modernisation into the province, the new town was incorporated into the sectarian strategy of the Unionist regime (but, as described below, there were many aspects of its early development which were "normal" and not manipulated for sectarian ends).

There was considerable hostility to the new town from Opposition members at Stormont, who were further antagonised by the Unionist Cabinet's decision to name it after Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister, and by the appointment of a past chairman (sic) of Larne Divisional Unionist Association as the Development Commission's first chairperson. In one of several Stormont debates on Craigavon, Gerry Fitt (Republican Labour Party) protested to the Unionist Minister for Housing and Local Government, W.J. Morgan, that:

"There are more urgent problems to be considered in our existing towns. If the Minister would take off his rose-coloured spectacles and look at the appalling housing conditions which exist in our towns he would get a great deal of satisfaction from trying to alleviate problems that already exist, without creating further problems through the institution of a new town. The Matthew Report was not put to the vote when it was debated in the House. No hon. Member had an opportunity to express his opinion on the Report in the Division Lobbies." (260)

There was considerable concern that the concentration of resources on developing Craigavon would be to the cost of older towns in the province, especially those outside the "Unionist pale". The implications of the spatial impact of the plan were seized upon much sooner in the case of the Matthew Report than in the case of the Durham County Development Plan (see chapter 3). It seems likely that this was because of sensitivities in Northern Ireland about the sectarian ramifications of policy decisions, while in County Durham there was among planners and political leaders an assumption that spatial policy was "in the common interest". There were also fierce conflicts between the state and local farmers who faced dispossession without, in their view, fair compensation. The success of the Unionist Government in this struggle reflected both the decline of small farming interests within the Unionist Party and the growing role of state intervention to support modernisation (Wiener, 1980, pp. 29-48).

Craigavon Development Commission was established in 1965 and took up its modernising remit vigorously. It was working in a climate of reformism emanating in large measure from the Wilson Government in Britain, which firmly backed the modernisation strategy (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, 1979, pp. 162-206). The first houses it erected, like those in Peterlee (chapter 4), were of good quality, and similar to those built by the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, a corporatist agency created in 1945 in a similar reformist development phase. The Commission pioneered the introduction of full Parker Morris housing standards into Ireland and the new town. It was to be a "rural city", with high quality landscaping and some of the most advanced planning concepts of the day.

The ideology which imbued the design ideas implemented in Craigavon had many similarities with the social democratic "vision" which marked the British new towns, particularly in trying to manufacture harmonious, modern communities in semi-rural settings and in overriding existing social relations seen as backward and reactionary (Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, pp. 214-222). In fact, the Development Commission attempted to socially engineer religious mixing by integrating social facilities and amenities, but this failed with the intensification of sectarian conflict in the early 1970s (Allen, 1981).

The first sector of the new town earmarked for development, and the only new sector to be completed, was named after William Brownlow, planter founder of Lurgan. Building began in 1967 with the crash development of the Meadowbrook and Moylinn estates for the large Goodyear plant. Goodyear was one of the first transnationals to locate in Craigavon, creating 2,000 jobs, many of which were unskilled and went to catholic workers despite the new town's deliberate location in the Unionist pale. The company received a government incentive grant believed to be 45 per cent of the £6.5m needed to install the plant (261). However, it was not possible to fill Craigavon's labour pool quickly enough and within a few months Goodyear ran into labour shortage problems which badly hampered the plant's production targets. The main reason for this was that people were not moving to the new town because of high rents resulting from the Commission's obligation to balance its housing account. Workers from Belfast could not afford to move. The Managing Director of Goodyear argued that the new town's houses should have been built to lower standards and rented out more cheaply:

"I hate to say that housing in Craigavon is too good for those who come. I just think it is a little bit too rich for the pocket book." (261)

And indeed some of the subsequent building used "quick and cheap package deals", only to deteriorate rapidly and become the most difficult-to-let parts of the housing stock when housing surpluses emerged at the end of the modernisation period (262). Much use was made of experimental designs, which were criticised in subsequent consultants' reports (see below).

The adverse effects of high rents on labour mobility were considered by the Development Programme 1970-75 prepared by Matthew, Wilson and Parkinson (1970). It argued for more of the costs of modernisation to be borne by individual households, especially as this would moderate demands for higher standards for the new housing. It stated:

"Housing subsidies are expensive and with the large housing programme now contemplated, the total cost becomes formidable. There may moreover be demands for larger subsidies in order to keep down rents on the new houses. Such demands may sometimes be made unreasonably by people who want to have it both ways: they want new and better houses but they want to pay no more rent. Unreasonable demands must be resisted and distinguished from genuine cases of hardship where special measures may be necessary of a radically different kind ... When tenants object to the payment of a rent of, say 50s. a week, they probably do not realise that the true annual cost of the house is over £6 a week. In short the present arrangements do not bring home to them the extent to which they are being assisted. This would be done more clearly if rents were at an economic level and those in need were given cash or vouchers equivalent to stated cash amounts that reflected their particular requirements." (pp. 108-109)



Means-tested rent rebates were introduced for low-income tenants to cushion the effect of relatively low wages and high rents. However, during the 1974-79 Labour Government rents were, in fact, kept down as part of the strategy on costs and prices agreed with the trade unions. The Housing Executive was actually refused permission to make a small rent increase during these years (Brett, 1986, pp. 112-113). It was only when the general election victory of the New Right in 1979 finally ended social democratic corporatism that rents were increased - very substantially - to reduce general subsidies. In Northern Ireland these dramatic rent rises were forced through by central government directive in the face of Housing Executive opposition (Brett, 1986, p. 113).

The Development Programme 1970-75 argued that "Craigavon is poised to advance very quickly" (p. 136) but called on central government to locate more public projects in the area. Significant economic and population growth were anticipated (this was 1970). Within a few years, however, it was clear that these forecasts, on which modernisation had been based, were optimistic. But the Development Commission continued with its building programme for a number of reasons. Money was allocated and very heavy initial state investments had already been made. In addition, while the "catholic extension" of Lurgan had been completed, the final phases of the new town's development were a "protestant extension" of Portadown. Craigavon's large housing surplus, creating an intractable housing management problem in the 1980s, largely originates from this time.

In the 1970s a number of articles appeared in the media blaming working class people for not taking up the opportunities offered by this modern new town. An economic survey of the province in 1971 stated:

"... people used to paying low rents for tatty houses were not prepared to pay the higher rents charged on Craigavon's modern, if rather uninspired looking, houses. But now a generous rent rebate scheme is in being and there is a waiting list for the houses ... Nevertheless there does seem to be a reluctance among the people of Belfast to move away from the familiar surroundings, however rundown these may be. This is, perhaps, yet another sign of the innate social conservatism of Ulster, which both reinforces and is reinforced by its people's religious prejudices and political allegiances." (263)

A provincial newspaper argued that people should:

"... raise their standards and behaviour and at least acquire the intelligence to appreciate the importance of what Craigavon is offering them." (264)

The imagery of harmonious labour pools was contrasted with the conflict of the old population centres, as this economic commentary illustrates:

"Craigavon and the new developments planned for Antrim and Ballymena ... should not simply be Ulster's showpieces but the forcing houses of social change. That is why in planning Ulster's future it is important that the emphasis should be placed more on the development of such new growth points than upon propping up the older and more strife-ridden centres of population. The people of Ulster have to learn to mix together and, to make sure that happens, they have got to move." (265)

In addition to the moves to reduce housing costs discussed above, other measures were introduced to fill up the labour pools, including cash grants and a proposal (which was not implemented) to remove rent control

in Belfast to "push" people out of the city (Matthew, Wilson and Parkinson, 1970). The main method of displacement from Belfast was large-scale redevelopment in the inner-city which moved thousands of workers out to where housing was available in the growth centres and freed valuable land in the city for roads and commercial development (Wiener, 1980; Parson, 1981).

The same techniques of modernist propaganda as were encountered in County Durham were employed in North Armagh. For example, the Craigavon Planning Executive claimed that:

"CRAIGAVON NEW TOWN IS ABOUT PEOPLE AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE. The aim of the new town is to offer an alternative way of life to the present day city, in conditions of well paid jobs, attractive housing and local amenities and where there are plenty of facilities for leisure." (266)

Thus Craigavon was to be the beginning of a new era of modernisation. But its reformist elements contradicted the sectarian motivations of the Unionist statelet. The contradictions were illustrated by the behaviour of the Development Commission's Fabian-minded Chief Architect/Planner, Geoffrey Copcutt. Copcutt had worked with Matthew in Cumbernauld and was appointed chief architect-planner for Craigavon in August 1963. In June 1964 he made a speech describing Craigavon as a "stroke of genius" (267). Two weeks later he resigned, alleging that:

"... the Stormont government would not countenance any scheme that would upset the voting balance between Protestants and Roman Catholics ... Religious and political considerations are dominant in the new city decision ... I have become disenchanted with the Stormont scene ... it has shown signs of a crisis ridden regime and

has asked us to engineer propaganda rather than design a new city ... the rejuvenation of Londonderry should have preference." (268)

Copcutt was replaced by another modernist technocrat, Alexander Bannerman. While Copcutt opposed what he saw as sectarian obstacles to modernisation, his demands for resources to be re-directed to Derry necessitated a complete revision of modernisation strategy which was out of the question for both political and economic reasons. In the same way that the Stormont regime could not ensure that the development of Craigavon served its purposes because of its dependence on capital's investment decisions, it could not as a capitalist state restructure planning to contradict the dominant economic forces which produced uneven development. As in County Durham, the local state's strategy was to facilitate capitalism in the belief that resulting economic growth would be of political benefit.

Protests against the new town continued. In June 1969 five Opposition Stormont MPs called on the government to defer developing Craigavon until it had investigated whether better results would be achieved by regenerating existing towns (269). A local planner commented in retrospect:

"There were ideas for image-building, but the myth creation exercise failed as people came to realise that Craigavon was just a housing estate between Lurgan and Portadown. The Craigavon idea was superimposed on County Armagh by planners from Cumbernauld. Planning was used as a sectarian weapon. There were no votes in developing republican areas." (270)

The use of an unelected local state agency to "impose" the new town was the same approach as with the British new towns, although in Northern Ireland its powers extended to an ability to take over all local government functions. This was applied to the two rural district councils but not to the technically and politically stronger Portadown and Lurgan municipal councils (Allen, 1981). By 1973, however, the combined effect of centralising major local government functions and proroguing Stormont had removed all meaningful local democracy in Northern Ireland (Birrell and Murie, 1980, pp. 182-183). Craigavon Development Commission was disbanded with the reorganisation of local government and its functions spread among a number of statutory agencies.

## 7.2 The decline of Craigavon

The fact that Craigavon did not attract large numbers of protestants and that many of the jobs initially created, and much of the housing, went to unskilled catholics, meant that there were few Unionist protests when the British Government dissolved the Development Commission after the shortest life of any new town development agency in the UK (Carolan, 1987, p. 12). But there was dismay among many local tenants who now felt abandoned to both a new and notoriously sectarian loyalist Borough Council and the economic recession (Craigavon Independent Advice Centre, 1982, pp. 3-6). A Workers Party member of Craigavon Borough Council interpreted events as follows:

"Craigavon as a bastion of protestantism didn't work. It was failing and with catholics coming in, interest and investment

declined. The idea had been to do away with the ghetto system. But the new estates were meant to be for protestants. State schools were provided first." (271)

A local planner explained that in his view:

"Craigavon was a token gesture by O'Neill. Northern Ireland didn't really need a new town. With the debate in the 60s and 70s in Britain about inner city investment versus new town investment it was relatively easy to shift priorities to the inner city (of Belfast) in 1973 - there was opposition to, and little support for, Craigavon." (272; parenthesis added)

Far from population movement leading to sectarian mixing and harmonious pools of labour, many of the new arrivals to Craigavon from the late 1960s were predominantly catholic refugees from the violence in Belfast. The new town was one area where there was no shortage of housing (Brett, 1986, p. 68). Polarisation occurred and violence and paramilitary activity escalated in many parts of the new town so that Craigavon came to constitute what many catholics dubbed the North Armagh Murder Triangle. A pattern of religious segregation developed with the Lurgan side of the new town mainly catholic and the Portadown side mainly protestant. As this process occurred the new town's economic decline marginalised growing numbers of residents, and housing problems added to the crisis.

The state continued to justify Craigavon and explain its failure in conventional planning terms. For example, a government planner claimed that:

"The need to provide for overspill from Belfast and existing infrastructure made Craigavon the right choice. But the Government didn't foresee the lack of population mobility and the troubles which interrupted the supply of new factories." (273)

Craigavon Development Commission had made major investments to attract capital to the growth centre. £500m at 1976 prices was spent on new arterial roads, factory space, housing, a government training centre and a large hospital. Five new industrial sites were established at Annesborough, Silverwood, Seagoe, Carn and Mahon. Portadown, with its big protestant population, received the new technical college, the training centre, the hospital and two large industrial estates. These investments were part of Stormont's active regional policy in the 1960s, which succeeded in bringing in very high levels of external investment and stabilising manufacturing employment (see chapter 2). However, the disbandonment of Craigavon Development Commission on 30 September 1973 suggested an abandoning of Matthew's conception in the face of major downward revisions of economic and population growth. Its housing stock was transferred to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Like Peterlee, the local council was reluctant to see the demise of the new town agency which at least symbolised a privileged status for the area (274). A booklet produced by Craigavon Independent Advice Centre reporting the proceedings of a local conference of community activists in 1981 concludes that the attempt to modernise the area ended with the demise of the Development Commission:

"... the major task confronting the planners and the local authorities was to integrate Lurgan and Portadown successfully in the overall plan - a task which failed dismally and which was eventually abandoned in 1973. By the early 70s it had become

obvious that many of the calculations on which the original plan was based were false." (275)

The booklet argues that people were attracted to the modern housing estates between Lurgan and Portadown believing that these were to be the central part of a new city, but found themselves trapped at the end of the modernisation era in an area that was politically underrepresented and neglected by the newly-formed Craigavon Borough Council, had few local facilities, high housing and fuel costs, and growing unemployment.

The abandonment of the Craigavon growth centre became obvious towards the end of the 1970s. As in Britain, by 1977 the economic crisis and growing concern about the consequences of inner city decline led to a shift of resources away from greenfield development to inner urban areas and towards rationalising settlement patterns. By the end of the 1970s the problem of reducing reproductive costs and defending and creating viable markets appeared to dominate policy-making (see chapter 2). The Northern Ireland Regional Physical Development Strategy 1975-95

(Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, 1976) had revised planning policy in response to the new economic conditions. Population would be concentrated into 26 "District Towns" and strict controls over residential development in the countryside would be implemented. The "regeneration" of Belfast's inner city, potentially a good market for new investments in retailing, catering and private housing for upper income groups moving back into the city (a distinctive post-modern trend), would be a priority. Craigavon was being left to "go it alone on the assumption that it is sufficiently established and dynamic to



ensure regenerative growth" (276). But in contrast to Belfast, Craigavon was planned for a Fordist regime of standardised accumulation through mass production ("organised" capitalism). Not only was this in decline, there were other places for companies to locate in Northern Ireland, with port facilities, cheaper land and better infrastructure than Craigavon.

One of the first public signs of concern about the new town's economic future was a statement issued by the newly-formed Craigavon Trades Council in 1976 which highlighted the damage caused by the continuing political violence and the consequences of the new town's growing economic problems at the end of the modernisation era (277). Although in 1978 the Craigavon area recorded the lowest rate of unemployment in Northern Ireland, by the end of the decade industrial decline had taken hold of the new town and investment had largely dried up (Morrissey, 1980; p. 86). Between 1960 and 1980 there were 52 closures in the area, representing over half of those firms that were producing in 1960 (278). Over the same period 60 new firms arrived, mainly state-assisted American, German and British companies, giving a net gain of only 8 companies, despite massive public investment and promotion. Many of the remaining employers were public bodies or established local firms taking advantage of the new town's modern infrastructure and services.

In 1982 the Goodyear plant eventually closed after a series of redundancies, with the loss of 750 jobs, soon followed by Ulster Laces, with the loss of 400 jobs. Craigavon Independent Advice Centre summed up the new town's experience of modernisation as follows:

"The construction of new roads, housing and industrial sites provided extensive employment opportunities. It is said of many local entrepreneurs at that time - 'The M1 made him' - but it cannot be said that the workers of Lurgan received an equal and lasting share of such good fortune." (279)

The dramatic increase in unemployment in Craigavon during the 1970s, even when compared with Northern Ireland as a whole, is illustrated in Table 7.1:

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Table 7.1: PERCENTAGES OF CRAIGAVON'S ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION OUT OF WORK, WITH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL COMPARISONS, 1971-1981

	Craigavon			Northern Ireland			Great Britain		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1971	8.8	2.6	6.9	10.1	4.7	8.3	5.4	4.9	5.2
1981	19.0	13.9	17.0	19.1	12.6	16.7	11.3	7.4	9.8

Sources: see note 280.

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With such high levels of job losses the main reason why people might move to what was commonly regarded as Craigavon's inhospitable "modern" environment disappeared. In the new sector many marginalised tenants became trapped in sink estates. The population projected for the new town in 1967 was 100,000 by 1980; in September 1979 the population stood at 57,500 and was expected to rise to only 70-73,000 by 2000 (281). The brief for Craigavon had been to plan for 120,000 people by the 1980s, with growth potential to around 180,000 by the end of the century (282).

The creation of Craigavon had a major impact on surrounding areas in the same way as the growth centre strategy in County Durham. The next two sections examine the relationship between this impact and cases of community action.

### 7.3 Restructuring and community action in rural areas

The development of Craigavon contributed to the growth of some villages in North Armagh which became executive/commuter settlements, such as Bleary, Waringstown, Tandragee and Rich Hill. Other villages and their working class populations were effectively starved of housing investment, a pattern reminiscent of County Durham (see chapter 3). For example, in Maghery no houses were built for nine years (283). Many families moved to Brownlow and these areas provided a labour supply for incoming companies such as Goodyear in the early stages of the new town.

Prior to the transfer of planning powers from local to central government in 1973, no written planning policy existed for rural areas outside the Belfast region (284). The Matthew Plan started a restrictive development control policy around Belfast as part of its modernisation strategy, but planning authorities in other counties, including Armagh, were less willing to introduce restrictions on local developers. However, such controls were imposed with the centralisation of planning powers necessary for regional modernisation and the introduction of legislation which brought Northern Ireland broadly into line with planning legislation in England and Wales.

The recent history of development control in Northern Ireland was discussed in chapter 2, where restrictive policies were linked initially to the growth centre strategy and subsequently to the reduction of reproductive costs and the rationalisation of settlement patterns. These policies led to the establishment of the Cockcroft Committee in May 1977 by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland in response to representations from councillors about local people who were unable to find suitable housing in their rural areas. Farmers' sons, for example, found themselves unable to build on the family's land. Strong kinship ties in rural areas were a key factor behind opposition to the restrictive controls. There was also pressure from speculative builders looking to develop for more affluent urban buyers. Following the Cockcroft Report (1978) the restrictions on development in the countryside were relaxed in 1979, but the policy of centralising state investments was not changed. The rationale was not to displace labour to the growth centres, as it had been under modernisation, but to reduce social expenses, as the planning service explained:

"Development in the countryside could present many problems. Pollution was a factor when there were too many septic tanks. Schools, hospitals, buses had to be provided. The child populations would mean demands on expensive-to-provide services. There are hidden subsidies such as the mail service. Water and electricity equipment would have to be maintained." (285)

Housebuilding became an issue in the rural areas subjected to these restrictive planning policies. In North Armagh community action about the issue arose in an area called "the Montaighs" - the mainly catholic

rural townlands on the shores of Lough Neagh to the North of Craigavon. The Montaighs Housing Action Group (MHAG) was formed to defend the area from depopulation and decline as the new town was developed (Morrissey, 1980, pp. 105-120).

The Montaighs' major sources of employment between 1870 and 1950 were turf cutting, weaving, fishing and farming (286). It was a spatial reserve army of labour: with the creation of Craigavon it provided a local pool of workers for incoming capital, but as the new town declined, growing unemployment forced many workers to find jobs in the black economy, especially building work financed by Housing Executive renovation grants.

The MHAG was established by a small group of local Republican Club (later re-named the Workers' Party) activists, and started its campaign following a public meeting in March 1973. The main issues were the need for more public sector housing and for improvements to the old rural labourers' cottages. Two local activists of the time, Morrissey and Austin (1974), argue that community action in the Montaighs arose as an alternative to local clientelist politics which encouraged dependency rather than involvement. The MHAG aimed to realise an "organic relationship with the communities of the Montaighs" and to defend the communities from imposed restructuring. Its members appeared to see it as a wider base than the Republican Clubs for pursuing the interests of the area and political education, while gaining general support through tackling concrete issues. A founder member explained its strategy as follows:

"The Republican Clubs were in the Montaighs Housing Action Group from the word go. Crilly, the local SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party) councillor, shot his mouth off with nationalist speeches, but was no good. The Housing Action Group got the tenants together. In fact it was difficult holding the tenants back. They mistimed demonstrations. The Group tried to restrain them and direct the action - the toilet dumping for example ... The Workers Party used the Group to get material for election propaganda. There was terrific support for republicanism at the time, but following the split between the Officials and the Provos, Provisional Sinn Fein had more sympathy ... Some members saw the Group as a vehicle for political education - people in control of their own affairs - and wanted to broaden the issues, pollution in the Lough and so on. They wanted to get past sectarianism to people's needs ... In the 1950s councillors' patronage allocated houses. The Montaighs Housing Action Group could bring people together and made the Housing Executive move. There were some very large meetings. It went into protestant areas as well. The Committee was elected and efficient. There was wide consultation." (287; parentheses added)

Although the strong feeling in the Montaighs that rural areas were being ignored by the state gave the MHAG a base of support, it failed to achieve a re-orientation of local politics. Its close association with the Republican Clubs became a liability. The Republican Clubs' own attempts to establish class politics failed and politically it lost support in the Montaighs in the late 1970s, mostly to extreme nationalist parties - the Irish Republican Socialist Party (the political wing of the Irish National Liberation Army, a breakaway faction of the Provisional IRA) and the catholic nationalist Irish Independence Party (288). The (majority) moderate vote in the Montaighs remained with the Social Democratic and Labour Party. As in County Durham, this community campaign could not win support beyond the small communities most directly affected by restructuring and when the impact of modernisation subsided the return to traditional loyalties easily eroded or marginalised political gains.

Another parallel with County Durham was the MHAG's resort to producing its own reports and proposals with which to campaign in response to the exclusion of local people from corporatist decision-making which directly affected them. The first major project undertaken by the MHAG was to prepare the Depopulation Report (289). Significantly, the report was grant-aided by the Community Relations Commission, which was a major community development initiative established in 1969 in response to the escalation of violence. The existence of such initiatives, which included the Community Worker Research Project discussed in chapter 8, constituted a major difference in state-civil society relations in Northern Ireland compared with County Durham, where such well-resourced support structures for community action were virtually non-existent. The reason for this may be found in the radically different political cultures of the two regions. In Northern Ireland the state faced a crisis of legitimacy. It has been argued that these community development projects were established with the deliberate intention of both legitimating the state and channelling social action into forms that could be incorporated and managed (Rolston, 1981; O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson, 1980, pp. 148-177). In contrast to the Montaignes, in County Durham there were no nationalist movements through which opposition to the state could be expressed and generalised. In Northern Ireland opposition to modernisation, which had major costs for catholic and protestant areas, could be used by political groupings to serve their own purposes: nationalists could claim that it was a struggle against the forces of British imperialism, while unionists could claim it was a struggle to defend their heritage. But whatever the ideological medium through which people made sense of modernisation, the

process itself was, as argued in chapter 2, part of capitalist restructuring, and the costs were borne by the working class in similar fashion in County Durham and North Armagh.

In the Montaighs the Depopulation Report argued that there had been substantial population losses in the townlands due to housing shortages as investment was channelled into the Craigavon growth centre. Although the depopulation figures were subsequently shown to be over-estimates, the general conclusion that the Montaighs was rapidly depopulating against the wishes of its residents due to a lack of investment and the deliberate restriction of housing opportunities to the new town appears to have been correct (290). The report was a boost for the MHAG, raising local interest and involvement, and attracting extensive publicity, as shown by the following selection of local newspaper headlines:

"RURAL DWELLERS NEED CONSIDERATION TOO"

"COTTAGERS HAVE WAITED THIRTY YEARS FOR BATHROOMS"

"MONTAIGHS GROUP GET ACTION"

"VILLAGES OUT IN THE COLD"

"FAIR DEAL WANTED FOR COTTAGE TENANTS"

"THE MONTAIGHS - AND THE WAY OF LIFE THAT IS DRAINING AWAY" (291)

The Depopulation Report provided a framework for community action by the MHAG. The Group decided to support the tenants of Ballinamoney cottages who had been pressurising the Housing Executive to refurbish the 32 houses built some 35 years previously under the Labourers' Cottages



Acts. Ballinamoney was the closest of the townlands to Lurgan and adjacent to the new sector of Craigavon. Despite Executive assurances that action would be taken, nothing happened until work eventually began following a local campaign that included dumping the contents of the cottages' earth closets outside the Housing Executive's offices. This reinforced the view of MHAG members that direct action was how to get the state to respond to the area's needs.

The MHAG also undertook campaigns on road safety and conditions, rubbish dumping and water supplies. However, the Loyalist Craigavon Borough Council regarded it with suspicion and a grant application was turned down (292). Residents in Bannfoot - a protestant area - refused to participate in the Group (293). The MHAG's base in a nationalist area and its tactics of directly challenging the state meant that it was easily labelled as a republican group rather than as a group attempting to defend working class people. But an issue was to emerge that provided an opportunity for the MHAG to break out of the sectarian mould.

This concerned the price at which unimproved rural labourers' cottages were being sold, following a new valuation which increased prices by 525 per cent. This raised widespread opposition in the Montaignes (Morrissey, 1980, p. 115). Prior to the establishment of the Housing Executive in 1972, rural labourers' cottages were being sold by the local council at prices affordable for local people (then around £300 each). Subsequently prices rose to reflect market demand to over £2,000, causing extensive local resentment (292). The Executive's

policy was to offer the cottages for sale to sitting tenants at a discount. If the tenant refused the offer, the cottage was put up for sale on the open market and the tenant re-housed. There was a threat that the cottages could be bought up as second homes and the small communities of the area broken up.

A particular concern was that older sitting tenants could not afford to buy and rehabilitate the cottages. The MHAG discovered that the problem was not confined to the Montaighs, but existed in many other rural parts of Northern Ireland, both catholic and protestant. Thus its campaign could be taken beyond the restricted confines of one area and largely one section of the working class. The cause attracted support from Northern Ireland Unionist MPs Jim Molyneaux, Harold McCusker and Ian Paisley. The Rural Housing Concern Group was formed to stimulate and co-ordinate local action, but it failed partly because, ironically, the MHAG was incorporated into a relationship with the state over the issue which split the campaign.

The MHAG took the position that demands for reducing the gross house price were unrealistic and they proposed a system of discounts and grants instead. A package of proposals was agreed with Stormont officials, helped by the fact that housing policy under the "post-modern" 1976 Housing Order (which was modelled on the 1974 Housing Act in England and Wales) was moving in the direction of the Group's proposals anyway. The package, however, was rejected at a General Meeting of Rural Housing Concern, where a majority wanted to pursue the demand for a standard £500 price. The organisation split and collapsed.

Attempts by the MHAG to encourage the formation of housing associations in the Montaighs failed; tenants bought as individual owner-occupiers.

At its third Annual General Meeting the MHAG adopted a plan for future work which included campaigning for amenities for Wolf's Island Terrace, for new Housing Executive houses at Derrytrasna and for the relaxation of strict development controls over isolated developments in the countryside. But no momentum developed and none of the proposed campaigns were initiated after the meeting. The Group lost three of its most active members which badly weakened it. One married and had to leave the area because of a lack of local housing and another was arrested on a terrorist charge. Getting people to make time commitments was a continual problem (293). The MHAG's association with the Republican Clubs continued to discourage people from getting involved in the Group. After its decline a local priest established a housing pressure group which, however, was weak and largely ineffective.

Following the Cockcroft Report (1978) and the shift towards "entrepreneurial" planning in the post-modern era, builders did start erecting private dwellings in some rural areas of Northern Ireland. In the North Armagh settlement of Derrymacash, for example, the local builders Lavery's built 62 houses on land originally designated as a football pitch (294). The Housing Executive deliberately scaled down its own building programme to avoid crowding out these speculative developments (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 1983a). A senior Housing Executive officer in Craigavon stated:

"The private sector is stepping in in rural areas. There's no need for the Housing Executive and no demand for rented housing." (295)

The relaxation of planning controls that occurred in the early 1980s was clearly aimed at supporting expansion at the bottom end of the housing market. One Lurgan builder, and chairperson of the Private Housebuilders Association of Northern Ireland, explained the local nature of the transition from modernisation to post-modern policy:

"The Association liaise with the Department of the Environment. There are less stringent controls now to help the construction industry. The DOE is also moving away from lower densities to higher densities. The higher priced market has virtually disappeared .. The land available and the type of housing are all open to negotiation now ... There's no difficulty, we're building higher density, low cost housing ... Public housing in the Craigavon area took up many good sites for private housing ... In the '50s and '60s Lurgan Borough Council had a good record in public housing and took the best sites. They could do that; council building didn't threaten the sectarian balance there." (296)

Although the various stimuli introduced in the early 1980s to promote private building for owner-occupation meant that it was even more difficult for the Housing Executive to fill the new town sector's empty housing, this appeared to be a cost of the transition to early post-modernism which the government was prepared to bear. Indeed, Craigavon's dilapidated rows of state housing were evidence of the failure of state intervention on this scale. However, as in County Durham where private builders opposed settlement categorisation, the relaxation of spatial policy and "freeing" of the market had an uneven effect in North Armagh, with only "attractive" sites receiving investment. In other areas the future of small communities depended on

the success of local lobbying of the Housing Executive to build, as in Derrytrasna where the primary school was at risk of closure (297). Certainly it was not always the case that the "private sector is stepping in in rural areas" following the end of large-scale modernisation, and without state intervention many townlands were threatened with continuing depopulation, as the following newspaper report on the views of the rector of Milltown, a small settlement on the shores of Lough Neagh, exemplifies:

"Mr Twaddell hits at landowners who are unwilling to sell even a plot of land for people wishing to settle in their home area, and the failure of people to renovate old houses ... Now is the time to press for more houses for our people ... Some townlands, once full of people, are now comparatively empty because the proper action was not taken at the right time." (298)

One of the MHAG's leading figures in its early days concluded some years after the campaigns that the effort was not worth it either in personal terms or in terms of what it had been possible to achieve for the area (299). People had become disillusioned, had had their sense of powerlessness in relation to the state reinforced by the struggle against modernisation and had retreated into their private concerns. This retreat into privatism was also a feature of the struggles documented in County Durham in previous chapters. In these circumstances, post-modern policy could be legitimised through a Self/Other opposition to "modernist" policy, which could be portrayed as having failed to tackle economic problems, as having destroyed communities and freedom of choice (see Therborn, 1980, pp. 27-28). Far from reflecting a growing sphere of autonomy in consumption, the

abandonment of struggle in civil society was a result of an inability to control what happened to the communities in which people lived in the Montaighs, and in County Durham. A large part of the blame for this might seem to lie in terms of the social relations of the local state, and particularly the people-officialdom relationship. But in fact the local state's room for manoeuvre was highly constrained by its subordinate position in relation to central government and capital - the loss of control over the style and location of state housing for example. Local projects of reform, or even sectarian discrimination, had to be pursued within largely prestructured contexts determined ultimately by the behaviour of capital.

Post-modernism offered the prospect of control via consumption by individuals in the market place. This has been a powerful ideology, and certainly seems to have influenced the local politics of reproduction in County Durham and North Armagh, but has not been expressed in major party political shifts, an understandable situation given the economic impact of New Right governments in these areas. The struggles against modernisation were struggles against a massive disruption of civil society by external forces, with the state clearly perceived as the immediate problem. Post-modern policies disorganised these struggles by supporting the responsibility of the individual consumer, the community and the market for reproduction, rather than displacing these as had undoubtedly occurred during the modernisation era. But while apparently resolving a problem with the relationship between state and civil society, this has not resolved the fundamental problem of the relationship of the working class to dominant capitalist institutions

and appears, in fact, to have restructured it in response to the needs of capital, albeit in the cultural clothing of post-modernity (see Harvey, 1987).

The next section of the present chapter shifts the focus to the impact of Craigavon on the fringing old urban centre of Lurgan, where residents also found themselves directly affected by modernisation imposed by the state.

#### 7.4 Restructuring and community action in urban areas

The development of Craigavon as a major growth centre had an impact on the older urban centres of Lurgan and Portadown which fringed the new town sector. Strict controls were placed on private development in the designated area and speculative building was forced out to Rich Hill and Tandragee. The restrictive effect this had was evidenced by the fact that with the post-1979 relaxation of planning controls outside the "key centres" speculative building expanded rapidly in Moira, Waringstown, Bannfoot, Bleary and other "attractive" sites. In Lurgan the development of the new town sector meant a stop to any expansion of Lurgan's periphery or additions to the housing stock, and these controls continued after the decline of new town sector because of the large number of vacant properties there. Local politicians continued to call for more Housing Executive building in Lurgan and Portadown; construction, it should be noted, which was to traditional designs and would be located in popular areas (300). The Housing Executive's Regional Director explained why this was resisted:

"More building is not on when there are 800 houses empty in Brownlow. Councillors take a personal view of the problem, but the Executive has to see overall objectives ... Waiting lists are essential for good housing management. We have to avoid vacant dwellings." (301)

Housing Executive plans to redevelop old terraced housing in Lurgan raised fears that families would be re-housed in Brownlow, especially as the number of houses "put back" could be less than those demolished. When, in the late 1970s, the catholic St Peter's area of Lurgan was threatened with plans for a new road and redevelopment, the proposals were opposed because of the costs of displacement and eventually fell victim to public expenditure cuts (302). Many Lurgan residents had been able to purchase their homes from their landlords and they provided cheap, solid fuel heated and comfortable accommodation in old-established communities and convenient neighbourhoods. Perhaps above all sectarian territories were well-established. It was this stock that was targeted for redevelopment by the Housing Executive at the end of the 1970s. Despite the demise of modernist planning strategy, the Housing Executive was able to continue with a significant redevelopment programme in contrast to Britain, where public sector new build was slashed, because of the political and economic consequences of any substantial reduction in housing activity (Singleton, 1986; Weir, 1983).

Insofar as the political/military conflict was intensified by employment and housing inequalities, the British state would appear to have regarded the large numbers of unskilled catholic, and to a lesser degree protestant, workers both employed and housed through a construction drive as a political benefit of continuing housing "modernisation". But



this was on a much smaller scale than during the "modernisation era", and more consideration could be given to the style and location of the new housing. It was aimed at "bringing in" marginal groups by providing "modern" housing in place of "slums". It meant the building of "new communities", on the basis of which the state could attempt to secure support for its presence in civil society, as well as use redevelopment to design housing areas in ways that made them easier to police (Alcorn, 1982). Insulated from civil society to a much greater degree than even the District Councils of County Durham, and free from the pressures which produced Brownlow's mass housing disasters, the state could pursue modernising housing policy in Northern Ireland largely unhindered by local politics, the Housing Executive managing protest as and when it occurred. Indeed, opposition, which would generally take the form of defending existing communities, could be portrayed as sectarian and "getting at the state" if residents refused to co-operate with consultation exercises later introduced to smooth the transformation of housing environments.

In Lurgan there was opposition to any prospect of rehousing in the new town sector and most people displaced by the redevelopment schemes were re-housed within the old town, such as on the new Shankill estate. Redevelopment and rehabilitation schemes were started with very little consultation, progress was slow and the work disruptive and inconvenient for both those directly affected and neighbouring residents (sometimes conflicts between streets broke out as a result). Many of the houses being cleared were fit and had received renovation grants in the recent past. In one area - Ulster and Clare Streets - original redevelopment

plans were scrapped when residents protested about losing their sizeable gardens. The Republican Clubs attempted to use opposition to modernisation to develop class politics. They promoted direct action, such as blocking roads. Local councillors did not get involved. Militant tactics, however, had the effect of more moderate residents leaving the residents' associations (303). One local activist at the time, and ex-chairperson of both St Peter's Community Association and the Mary Street Action Committee, described the actions in the following terms:

"The Housing Executive was very slow. There was no concern for people's welfare. The area was blighted from 1977 and only basic repairs were done. The houses were cheap to live in. People would be moved into new Executive houses with £24 (a fortnight) rents ... In retrospect we should have had a plan of action, kept party politics out, and campaigned for more say in design and the costs of rents and heating." (304)

In the St Peter's redevelopment area some replacement terraces were under construction by the Housing Executive in 1981, but further development was threatened by cuts. The Executive had responded by calling for housing association investment in the local newspaper (the cuts were subsequently reversed but on the condition that further rent rises were implemented; Brett, 1986, p. 113). In Mary Street conflict had arisen when residents demanded the retention of the old street name (305).

The redevelopment areas in Lurgan were predominantly catholic and feelings of Unionist prejudice against them were common, especially when they attempted to develop cultural facilities for their areas.

Craigavon Borough Council opposed the development of a Gaelic football pitch for St Peter's and also the use of a (mixed) state primary school as a community centre. Conflicts with the Housing Executive, however, conformed to the people-officialdom axis identified in chapter 1, with sectarian issues playing a minor role except indirectly in, for example, territorial struggles. Community action was aimed at preserving the attributes of the old environments. Home ownership seemed central to this as it meant the opposite of modernism's bureaucratic landlordism, and generally cheaper costs. Although in Lurgan and Portadown sales under the Right to Buy were substantial (in contrast to the new town sector), in the redevelopment areas where new build was to traditional designs, the Right to Buy was denied new tenants because the historic cost of building the house had not been eroded by inflation, placing a floor on discounts little below market price. When house prices started to stagnate or fall in real terms in the early 1980s, estate agents argued that home ownership was now available to more lower-income households (306). It could cost less to buy a small terraced house with a mortgage than to rent from the Housing Executive.

Thus despite the "residual" nature of modernist housing action in the old urban centres, the social relations characteristic of modernism dominated the housing consumption experiences of the small urban communities faced with redevelopment. Against this many residents saw the housing market as guarantor of freedom from interference and of self-ownership, as well as offering housing in areas where self-help, cheap costs and convenience were important attributes in the early 1980s.

### 7.5 Summary

This chapter has surveyed the spatial impact of modernisation in North Armagh and presented community action about housing in areas affected by the Craigavon growth centre in the context of this restructuring and uneven development. Many similarities with the case studies from County Durham were shown, as well as some significant differences which, however, figured as contingent rather than generative factors in the community action. As in County Durham community action issues which were generated by modernisation were removed as foci of mobilisation not by the success of community action but as a consequence of the transition from modernisation to early post-modernism. "Residual" modernism persisted in local housing strategies due to its political and economic significance for the state, but was very different from the large-scale restructuring of earlier years.

The chapter has suggested that the working class experience of modernisation created fertile conditions for the ideology of early post-modernism regarding self-reliance and freedom of the consumer. However, while some people could take up this option by moving out of the "modern environments", many others remained trapped in the depressed modern housing estates of the new town sector. The next chapter turns to examine this experience, community action responses, and how these were managed by the state.

## CHAPTER 8

### COMMUNITY ACTION IN CRAIGAVON NEW TOWN

This chapter is an account of the various community projects launched in Craigavon and arising out of the problems of the new town, of tenants' struggles in the new town and of the management of these struggles by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. As discussed in chapter 7, Northern Ireland has seen several state initiatives in community development, establishing support structures which formalise and manage community action. The present chapter examines struggles both within and outside these support structures. As in previous chapters, it is attempted to relate this action to the experience of modernisation and particularly the experience of living in a "modern environment" in the early post-modern era.

#### 8.1 Community development in the new town

In 1972 Craigavon Development Commission's Community Development Department established the Brownlow Community Council as an umbrella organisation for estate-based tenants' and community associations in the new town sector. The Commission envisaged a corporatist relationship between itself and the Community Council to manage the modernisation process at grassroots level (Carolan, 1987, p. 45). The Community Council involved itself in various joint initiatives with state agencies, including the Priority Estates Project discussed later in the present chapter.

In May 1976 the problems of Craigavon were discussed by a cross-section of members of Brownlow Community Council at a four-day conference in Huissen, Holland, sponsored by the Dutch Northern Irish Advisory Committee. This was essentially a review of the experience of the new town. Participants also showed an awareness of impending problems as the modernisation era came to an end. A number of "priority issues" were identified (307). The first was local democracy, and it was decided to lobby for better ward representation in the new town sector of Brownlow and to look at the possibility of "community candidates". Other issues were prices in the shops, access to recreational facilities, the attraction of industry, community job creation, and the promotion of residential integration.

Another important development was the formation of Craigavon Trades Council in 1976 as a result of the "Better Life for All" campaign initiated by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Morrissey and Morrissey, 1979). It became one of the more successful of the new trades councils, and was prominent in promoting a trade union perspective on a range of issues (Morrissey, 1980, p. 121). Its involvement in community action was largely shaped by two individuals - a local community worker and a polytechnic lecturer (308). When they left the area in 1978, this involvement continued as a result of the influence of community workers on the Trades Council.

One of the first initiatives undertaken by Craigavon Trades Council was to tap the support for community development being offered by the Department of Education under the Labour Government's Lord Melchett.

The Department launched a Community Worker Research Project in 1978, allocating £45,000 over three years to be paid directly to community groups through district councils, community services being one of the few functions which the local councils retained after 1973. The aims were to support projects providing for unmet needs and to encourage district councils to take an interest in community initiatives.

Professor Hywel Griffiths was appointed chairperson of the Project Steering Committee. At an Inaugural Symposium for the groups selected for assistance, he described the rationale of the project:

"... it is here in the sustained and widespread taking of small beneficial initiatives rather than in any administrative master-plan or ideological utopia that the foundation of a better future for all must lie ... This symposium brings together a small representative sample of those activists who serve the community through direct action with representatives who serve the community through the local political system as expressed by the District Councils. Although from time to time these two groups of people may disagree with each other they can be recognised by a common badge of identity: it is a badge of hope, of concern for others, of perseverance and courage and of constructive social responsibility."  
(309)

Griffiths was critical of "modernisation" - the imposition of large-scale state planning and development especially. In fact, rather than developing a more "human" alternative to modernisation, which was what Griffiths appeared to suggest, the Craigavon project ended up relieving the costs of recession and isolation in the residualised modern housing estates of the new town sector.

An application was made through Craigavon Trades Council for funds to employ a community worker to develop three inter-linked projects: a law

centre, a women's group and a social studies group. The case was made on the basis of three arguments. First, the general problems of new towns were exacerbated in Craigavon's case by shortage of funds and civil unrest; second, the very large proportion of state housing had resulted in a preponderance of low-income families; and third, there was inadequate support for community work from Craigavon Borough Council (310).

The Craigavon Social Studies Group had been formed in 1976 by a group of teachers and social workers and ran various community education initiatives in the area, concentrating on political education for local activists. The Craigavon Women's Group had been set up in May 1977 in response to the isolated position of many women in the new town to campaign for women's rights. In August of that year Craigavon Trades Council sponsored a meeting to discuss establishing a Community Law Centre. An ad hoc committee was formed with the chairperson of the Trades Council as its secretary. A lot of activity was generated by these projects, leading to the submission to the Community Worker Research Project for a full-time worker to develop them. The projects were seen as having the political purpose of linking workplace and "community" issues (311).

The Craigavon application was one of 14 projects selected out of 48 submissions for funding by the Department of Education. But it ran into problems when Craigavon Borough Council refused to administer the grant. The project was seen as an imposition, led by radical activists who were unaccountable to the public and hostile to Unionism (Morrissey, 1980,



pp. 126-127). Most of the people involved had, in fact, been involved with the campaign in the Montaighs (chapter 7). A local newspaper reported:

"A community trouble-shooter offered free by the Government to help Craigavon voluntary groups deal with new city social problems has been flatly rejected by the Borough Council.

In a heated debate this week Councillor Calvert (DUP Mayor) described those behind the scheme as 'a bunch of people I would not like to see in a position to do projects in the Craigavon area.'

Councillor Philip Black (OUP Deputy Mayor) said it was a retrograde step and he didn't want to see taxpayers' money handed out free to groups over which the public has no control." (312; parentheses added)

On 31 August 1978 Lord Melchett told the Co-ordinating Committee for the Craigavon Project that he would be meeting with the Borough Council, and that it was possible to pay funds directly if its opposition continued. After several attempts to get a motion supporting the project through the Borough Council, Workers Party councillor Tom French eventually succeeded in January 1979, and the project started in April. In January 1980 the Craigavon Independent Advice Centre opened in a previously vacant Housing Executive property in a run-down estate in Brownlow.

The Centre ran with funding from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland under the Community Worker Project from April 1979 to April 1982, and secured further funding to continue beyond this date. Although the Borough Council had eventually agreed to administer the grant, a decision influenced by certain of the more notorious committee members moving away from the area (Morrissey, 1980, p. 127), there was

little commitment to the project. In 1982 the council refused a request for a £6,000 grant to continue the employment of a community worker. One councillor stated in the debate that "reds under the bed had been quoted to him" (313).

The Advice Centre's 1981 Annual Report chronicles the growing problems of marginalisation in the new town. The main activity of the community worker had become advice work and a wide range of advice and support work was undertaken with back-up from volunteers from the Women's Group. This averaged 40 queries a month, many of them referrals from agencies such as Social Services, including fuel problems, benefits, redundancy, unfair dismissal, maintenance payments, family crises, separation and battered women. The report highlights poverty as the main problem the Centre encountered:

"... one of our main problem areas is general debt and fuel poverty. We relate this directly to the high rate of unemployment in Northern Ireland and the high percentage of people who must eke out a living on benefits which are totally inadequate to meet their needs." (314)

In addition to advice work, the Centre hosted various courses which reflected the nature of deprivation in the area, including welfare rights, women in Irish history and housing allocations, and provided a meeting place for local groups. Its community worker attended a variety of meetings, including the Northern Ireland Poverty Forum, a Belfast Housing Inquiry and the Community Education Forum, and made a five-week visit to Tyneside to look at similar projects. The Centre's users were

largely the ghettoised tenants of the worst new town estates, mostly catholics.

The Centre opposed the Borough Council on issues such as the banning of Sunday opening of recreational facilities and its failure to respond to social needs. The council had become renown for its sectarianism (315). In 1981 it refused to take part in a motorcade from Lurgan to Belfast organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to protest against unemployment and Conservative Government policies (316), but it actively supported the Loyalist workers' "Day of Action" in the same month. In a debate on continuing the adjournment of council business in protest against lax security and Anglo-Irish talks in 1982, the DUP Deputy Mayor was reported as saying that:

"... he had no loyalty to any Government or Parliament and that his loyalty was to the Queen who was a Protestant." (317)

The council's sectarianism was fuelled by events such as the republican hunger strikes of 1981. Some catholics in republican areas began to re-name streets and estates illegally after dead hunger strikers, leading local unionist politicians to demand that a £1m Housing Executive improvement scheme on one of the estates in Portadown, named after Winston Churchill but re-named by the residents after dead hunger striker Marin Hurson, be scrapped. A unionist spokesperson was reported as saying:

"There are hundreds in loyalist estates in Portadown which require repairs, and they would deserve public money rather than an estate

which seeks to dishonour the memory of a man whose leadership led to an evil tyranny being overthrown." (318)

Brownlow Community Council concerned itself with establishing an "identity" for the new town sector, arguing that the planners' concept of "Craigavon" as a corporate whole meant that the particular needs of Brownlow were not being met or even recognised within a borough dominated by Portadown and Lurgan. In 1977 it published The Brownlow Report which highlighted the political under-representation of the area, the lack of public facilities and deteriorating housing conditions. This was followed in 1979 by the report Future of Brownlow. This identified problems with housing, landscaping, shopping, social services, education and recreation in the area. The issue of political representation was prominent. The report stated:

"At present, Brownlow constitutes one ward in Craigavon district. It is grouped together with five other wards in area 'C' to return six members to the Borough Council by *proportional representation*. Unfortunately for the citizens of Brownlow it has 5,747 electors, whereas the average of the other 24 wards is 1,775 electors ... The political effects are that Brownlow has one councillor living within its boundaries ... This has to be balanced against the representation of Lurgan and Portadown, neither of them much more than twice the size of Brownlow, which have blocks of representatives who from time to time think and vote in a group ignoring party lines ... The only hope for any unity in Craigavon, any drawing together of the rival towns, distrustful of each other and of the Craigavon idea, lies in a strong voice for Brownlow ..." (319).

This under-representation, it argued, meant that there was too little spending to the benefit of the working class residents of Brownlow, while public money spent in the area went to major recreational projects for day-trippers.

In November 1981 the Management Committee of Craigavon Independent Advice Centre organised a conference entitled "Craigavon in the 80s". Papers were presented by local community activists and trade unionists, and were published the following year (Craigavon Independent Advice Centre, 1982). The report described the origins of Craigavon, its failure to reach its population target and to integrate Lurgan and Portadown in the overall plan for the new town. It argued that the abolition of Craigavon Development Commission and the establishment of Craigavon Borough Council, with interests mainly focused on Portadown, left Brownlow with no real voice. The political under-representation of Brownlow was underlined. The lack of basic community facilities was contrasted with the new town's prestigious recreational amenities. Growing unemployment was portrayed as a critical problem, and controls over state-assisted companies and employment creation within the Brownlow housing sector were called for. One consequence of the area's neglect, it argued, was Brownlow's problem of surplus housing, with three estates almost derelict. The division of Craigavon's housing estates along social and religious lines was blamed on the allocation of more attractive estates to better-off families and the ghettoisation of the poor. Providing support for Merrett and Gray's (1982, p. 288) criticism of consumption cleavages that the concept wrongly implies a broadly uniform housing consumption experience within a particular housing tenure, the report highlighted the extent of differentiation within state housing in Craigavon:

"... it has been pointed out that NIHE (Housing Executive) in Belfast when offering alternative accommodation to e.g. low income families, invariably offer housing in Craigavon or Antrim rather than in Poleglass or any of the new model estates in Belfast ...

Families on lower incomes are directed to the less desirable housing and are then blamed for the deterioration of those areas. It is no wonder that the overwhelming experience of most tenants in relation to housing management is powerlessness." (320)

It was also noted that only 8 per cent of Brownlow's housing was owner-occupied, although originally 20 per cent had been planned for. This, the report argued, had been a factor in the movement of families out of the area. However, most state housing did not conform to the image of dereliction Craigavon was fast acquiring. Twenty of Brownlow's twenty-three estates "are all of a more conventional design and generally present a picture of reasonably well maintained estates, most of them almost fully occupied" (321). As discussed below, the Housing Executive promoted this stock for sale, further residualising the rented housing. Indeed, two of the most desirable estates built by the public sector were sold to private buyers despite being originally intended as housing for rent, with the Housing Executive's claiming in publicity that buying was little more costly than renting.

The cost of heating was identified as a major issue in the report, as the heating systems had been designed on the basis of cheap oil. Fuel poverty had reached serious levels. It claimed that the Housing Executive's attitude to these issues was uncooperative compared with relations tenants' groups had had with the old Development Commission. It concluded:

"In view of all the problems, one would possibly expect a high level of community action around these issues. Surprisingly, however, this has not been the case. There have been many efforts at organising community action, and several community workers and interested community activists were involved in issues in the past

... however, there was no organised, mass protest of tenants against conditions in the area, even as Brownlow became more and more a ghost town." (322)

Comparisons can be made with the growth centre estates of Bessemer Park and Peterlee where, as described in chapter 4, tenant mobilisation was generally weak. This contrasts with the stronger mobilisations which occurred in defence of the old settlements, such as the Category "D" villages and the Montaighs, when they were threatened by spatial restructuring. Morrissey (1980, p. 123) makes some pertinent observations:

"The Brownlow sector of Craigavon was a difficult one in which to develop community action. While the new town generated many unforeseen social problems, it proved a difficult context for the growth of community groups ... The relocation of low income families from Belfast and elsewhere into a town spatially designed for affluent workers created obvious problems. While certain estates like Rathmore and Ridgeway were heavily stigmatised, a degree of stigma was associated with the entire area ... Coupled with social problems that undoubtedly existed, such attitudes led to a general apathy towards community action. When estates were first occupied, there were many examples of developing residents' associations but these tended to be short lived."

There was a high turnover of residents and activists in the area which militated against organisation. Although the Development Commission had supported the formation of community groups during the modernisation era, its successors, the Borough Council and the Housing Executive, did not at first encourage the organisation of tenants (323). The Borough Council limited its support to "registered" entertainment and social groups, and by 1980 although Craigavon had many good community centres and seven community workers, community action remained weak (324).

Nevertheless, the umbrella organisation Brownlow Community Council survived, grant-aided by the Borough Council, and was to enter into a partnership with the Housing Executive in a Priority Estates Project designed to privatise the estates and stimulate self-help (see below). Some scathing criticisms of this cooperation were made by a number of the more radical activists in the new town sector who argued that such initiatives were little more than tokenism:

"They had a representation dominated by middle-class interests and by statutory representatives. In the end, they became just a talking shop with no history of active involvement on the real issues affecting the people." (325)

The real struggles, they argued, were based outside such partnerships with state agencies:

"Several (tenants') associations have re-formed and are actively pressurising for better housing repairs and improved facilities. In areas where there is district heating, local groups have involved themselves in a province-wide campaign around problems of excessive charges and inaccurate meterings. Housing Action Groups were active against rent rises. The continuing expansion of CIAC (Craigavon Independent Advice Centre) has provided a valuable focal point for many active groups in the area and has furthered the links between trade unionists and community activists by involving Craigavon Trades Council directly in the management of the centre." (326; parentheses added)

One initiative the Borough Council did take was to sponsor the Craigavon Combined Community Associations with the aim of encouraging "partnership" with statutory bodies, concentrating on promoting community relations and running functions. But this was unsuccessful.



Brownlow's tenants' association were varied in terms of their foci and levels of activity (327). Some were more concerned with excluding "undesirables" from the estate than tackling social issues. Others participated in joint ventures with other groups in Northern Ireland, such as the short-lived campaign against the 40 per cent rent rise of 1981 (328). There were also a few home owners' associations protesting about ground rents.

One of the strongest tenants' groups was Meadowbrook Tenants Association, and this estate provided the Housing Executive with a test-bed for experimenting with the management of the problems of Brownlow. In particular, there was increasing pressure on the Housing Executive to replace district heating systems. The growing cost of running the systems had largely been passed onto tenants and the result was escalating fuel debt and increasing tenant protests (Action on Debt, 1980, pp. 20-24). To tackle the problem, both to make a case for financial aid to central government and to ensure a smooth conversion process, the Executive needed the support and cooperation of the tenants.

Meadowbrook Tenants' Association had been reformed in February 1981 following a public meeting after a dormant period of some five years (329). Concern had grown about the danger and expense of bottled gas used to heat the houses. A survey had shown that 95 per cent of tenants on the estate did not use the gas central heating, using instead cheaper paraffin heaters, one-bar electric fires or portable gas heaters. There had been "huge increases" in gas prices. The association was pressing

the Housing Executive to convert the houses to solid fuel. It was also angered by recent rent increases, with the May rise putting £3.50 on top of a £15 per week rent. The association argued that households' heating costs were well above the UK average, rents were approaching the UK average, but average wages were less. The association lent its support to public protests over the year's rent increase.

Its chairperson had been a committee member of Community Organisations Northern Ireland (CONI), a short-lived umbrella group aimed at establishing grassroots participation by uniting community groups in Northern Ireland, and eight years previously had stood as an SDLP candidate in the local election. He was a retired general labourer. His view was that tenants associations had to work as a team with the Housing Executive - an attitude that no doubt was behind the Executive's decision to work with his association on the heating issue, leading to a successful resolution of the bottled gas issue. A senior Housing Executive officer temporarily based in the Brownlow District Office to examine the problems of the new town sector recounted an interesting example of how "tenant participation" in Meadowbrook assisted its management tasks:

"Meadowbrook Tenants Association and the Housing Executive get on very well. I talked to the tenants group and then issued a leaflet giving the tenants a choice between two options. I arranged for the leaflet to be distributed and collected by the tenants association. In fact, they made a mistake in delivering some of the leaflets. If the Executive had made that mistake it would not only have cost money, but most importantly credibility." (330)

The chairperson of the association had been involved in the issue of Brownlow's three "problem" estates which stigmatised the whole area - Ridgeway, Rathmore and Legahory Green (see below). Some of the tenants in these estates had called for a public inquiry to bring the architects responsible to account, and he explained that it was a widespread view that the blame for the problems of this housing lay with the architects. The only solution, he argued, was to bulldoze the houses and rebuild - it was "a lovely site" - and indeed this was the solution eventually implemented. He, and other tenants like him, welcomed Housing Executive overtures about tenant participation. He had seen the possibilities when he participated in the Brownlow Community Council conference in Holland referred to at the beginning of the present chapter, and had been impressed with that country's

"... sensible planning and consultation ... they recognised even small problems from the start. Craigavon had started on too large a scale. The planners have to work with the people. If it's a good product there should be no need to advertise it. The Housing Executive should have tenants on its Board ... and the rents of what are inadequate houses halved ... Many problems, though, can be solved by talking them through." (331)

Whether the Housing Executive and the local tenants were now in agreement about what went wrong with modernisation and how to start tackling its legacy is a question which the next section addresses.

## 8.2 The ghettoisation of Brownlow

"House building may well be about to enter a new phase, a phase which will make the whole process more scientific and exact, and similar to flow line production. Much better detailing and finishing can be expected with faster completion times and over a

period, against guaranteed programmes, reduced costs or at least keenly controlled costs." (Craigavon Development Commission, 1966)

"The most important issues facing people in the new town are social and economic ones. Badly designed housing, expensive and inefficient heating systems and the general lack of employment facilities, have been major problems since the inception of the new city nearly twelve years ago, and certainly since the most recent economic recession ... Many people find that they have arrived in a new city area, where they have no relations or friends, no jobs and a costly new home to maintain. For many, their dreams of starting anew in Northern Ireland's first new city have been rudely shattered." (Craigavon Independent Advice Centre, 1982, p. 6)

These two quotations illustrate the theory and the reality of mass housing in Craigavon. Although much of the new build in Brownlow was of a high standard with good local facilities, and by the early 1980s most of the estates had settled down (with the new sector's population at some 12,000) the emergence of a housing surplus due to stagnating economic and population growth meant that growing numbers of houses began to stand empty in the most unpopular estates. Voids were concentrated in groups of three storey and split level units based on the assumption of large families which could afford to furnish and heat them. Defects associated with system built designs emerged and were compounded by bad construction. Expensive heating systems were abandoned by tenants in favour of alternatives which often caused damp and mould. Some layouts created a maze-like feeling and overblown car ownership projections led to groups of garages lying empty and vandalised, with people isolated from the main employment and leisure centres. Landscaped areas became overgrown and collected litter while the neighbourhood centres became vandalised and scrawled with graffiti.

Three estates were particularly badly affected by these problems - Ridgeway, Rathmore and Rosmoyle. These were built between the years 1969 and 1975 at a total cost of £2.1m (332). In 1981 only 25 per cent of the houses in the three estates were occupied. In Ridgeway 78 per cent of the 192 houses were vacant yet it had been fully occupied in 1974. A consultants' report drawn up for the Housing Executive to examine the situation stated:

"The 3 storey houses were unusual and alien in character and proved expensive to heat and furnish. Tenants have complained of roof and other defects resulting in damp penetration and condensation, and some of these defects may be traced to bad workmanship, during the disjointed contract phases. The 2 storey houses also gave cause for tenants' complaints related mainly to minor repairs. All these problems have been compounded by a casual level of provision of municipal services viz. street lighting, street cleansing and refuse disposal." (333)

Local newspapers reported tenants' complaints about vandalism, house-stripping, bad designs, rats and lack of play facilities for children. One report stated:

"The first impression of Ridgeway is one of desolation. Of the 300 houses, only 30-40 are occupied. Windows, if not boarded up or bricked up, are smashed. Wall tiles have also been smashed by the vandals and broken glass litters the roads ... This is contrasted with the neat, homely interiors of the occupied houses." (334)

The marginalisation of tenants living in what had been planned as modern accommodation for a major growth centre was graphically described by another newspaper report:

"When we go into Lurgan to shop, we are ashamed to give our address because of the bad name the estate has got ... The residents who are

left are not the gypsies and problem families they are made out to be ... Why should we pay extra rent for the shacks we are living in, the rent should be halved. Some of us are suffering from depression brought on by the conditions, and some are still recovering from injuries received in their own homes." (335)

Tenants were informed that their problems were under consideration at a high level, and were left to wait it out. In Ridgeway an Action Committee was formed in 1979 to press for improvements to the estate, but received no backing from local councillors except for one Workers' Party member (336). When it was set up there were 39 families living in Ridgeway's 192 houses but by June 1981 this had declined to 12-14 families. A particular issue was the difficulty of heating the wooden-framed and badly insulated houses. The Housing Executive "just said they could do nothing ... the tenants were told that they would be informed when a decision about the estate had been reached" (337).

In September 1979 a protest march was organised to the Housing Executive's District Office, which was well supported. Demands for repairs and environmental improvements were made, but the action was short-lived. The Action Committee folded in the summer of 1980 when the chairperson was suddenly transferred to a better house on the nearby Enniskeen estate. Other members became disheartened and people gradually moved out. In June 1981 most of the remaining tenants had applications for transfer in with the Housing Executive. One tenant considered that "the majority of people just used the committee to get a transfer out" (338).

In July 1979 a private firm of consultants engaged by the Housing Executive began to examine Brownlow's problems, especially what to do with the vacant houses (339). The Study Director was Alexander Bannerman, ex-chief architect/planner of Craigavon Development Commission, and his remit was to draw up a physical strategy for Brownlow "in the context of demand" and "which realistically might be implemented over the next five years" (340). The consultants' terms of reference also included a review of the social environment of Brownlow as well as a design evaluation. After observing that problems were caused initially by structural and design defects, the report highlighted the ghettoisation of Brownlow:

"The popular image of the core area is a negative one, suggesting a sub-culture of various forms of anti-social behaviour. This is not totally the case, but it is fair to state that since the early days these areas have attracted, or have been allocated, a significant proportion of social casualties who rely heavily on both statutory and voluntary welfare services, accumulate rent arrears and other debts, etc. Any physical initiatives to be undertaken must be coupled with a resolve by the respective communities to make the areas progressively viable." (341)

The tenants' action committees in both Ridgeway and Rathmore were apparently told in informal discussions with the Housing Executive that the tenants would be the first to see the consultants' report (342). But the report was kept secret, and it is possible that this "assurance" had been given to elicit tenants' cooperation with the study. The team inspected the houses and talked to tenants, asking them what they thought had to be done, although the only residents listed as consulted in the report were the chair and secretary of Brownlow Community Council, the parish priest, the presbyterian minister and "selected

Brownlow residents". When completed, the report appears to have gone straight to Stormont without even the Housing Executive District Office seeing it. Shortly after this, all requests for transfers were granted and the estates were emptied. The possibility of renovating Ridgeway was dropped, a decision influenced by the failure of a £1.5m scheme in Rathmore to entice tenants back into the housing.

However, despite this sporadic community action by the tenants, organisation was weak and it was largely insignificant compared with the effect of individual households refusing to live in the houses when other housing was available. The extent of the breakdown in relations between tenants and housing management brought about by the crisis was reported by one of the consultants appointed to assess the situation:

"There was no concerted community action in Brownlow. The Rathmore and Ridgeway groups didn't really exist - they were completely out-gunned. Housing Executive officials used disarming tactics - they would point out speakers at public meetings who had rent arrears. They would always check on the protestors. We had the impression there was a lot to hide - maintenance and resources were badly managed. We recommended (not in the report) that the District Manager be sacked. She described tenants in the office as 'unnecessary pedestrian traffic'. There was no meaningful dialogue between the Housing Executive and tenants. They tended to distinguish between 'respectable' tenants, who they'll talk to, and others who they won't...

A Ridgeway tenant allocated a house in Enniskillen resulted in Enniskillen tenants complaining and threatening to move out en masse. Ridgeway and Rathmore were dumping estates. There were no attempts to involve the community - no play areas, just despair and dereliction. The Housing Executive was concerned with control, with the least possible opposition. Its statutory responsibilities were its sole concern." (343)



The consultants' report recommended that Ridgeway, Rathmore and Legahory Green be dealt with through a combination of rehabilitation, demolition and mothballing. For Ridgeway the report recommended the demolition of 90 of the 192 houses. Its conclusions were based on the optimistic assumption of Brownlow achieving "modest but sustained growth over the period 1980-85".

In July 1980 the Housing Executive commissioned a further study by the New University of Ulster. This was produced in 1981 in two parts: the results of an attitude survey of residents and former residents of Ridgeway, Rathmore and Legahory Green; and an economic appraisal of options and recommendations (344). The former identified high levels of dissatisfaction with the houses, mainly concerning their general appearance, the heating system and dampness, but widespread satisfaction with most facilities and services. It also revealed a strong kinship pattern in the Craigavon area with refusers of accommodation tending not to have relatives in the new town while accepters did. For the majority of tenants their housing choices were restricted to state housing. The latter part of the study argued that short-term solutions, such as lower rents or "homesteading", would not work. Applying the (more realistic) assumption of very low growth in the long term, it was recommended that existing tenants of the three estates be transferred to one estate, or one plus part of another estate, and the remaining estate areas be either demolished or mothballed. The issue was whether a future increase in demand was likely before vacant houses became vandalised and irreparable.

The Housing Executive appointed a Principal Housing Officer as Acting District Manager in Brownlow for six months to review the problem in the light of these studies. None of the findings had been released publicly; it appeared that the Housing Executive were very sensitive about releasing any material that might support demands for demolition. His view was that Brownlow's problems were due to four factors (345). First, there was a lack of demand for rented housing in the area. Second, the housing was unpopular and had become dumping estates. Third, there was a psychological aspect involving people not wanting to move from Belfast. Fourth, the Executive was faced with a dilemma between regenerating Belfast and other areas or filling empty houses in Craigavon. Given these factors, privatisation of as much of the stock as possible was an attractive option in the present climate; already one estate had been sold for owner-occupation because the Executive was convinced that they could not fill it as rented housing. He claimed that:

"At the moment Brownlow is approximately 90 per cent Housing Executive stock. We hope that in five years time it will be 50:50. If people buy, people will stay." (346)

The answer was now "conventional" housing, but demolition of non-conventional housing was difficult to justify on economic grounds. The existing housing had to be packaged as attractively as possible to sell, including large discounts and improvement grants, and the worst demolished and the land sold for speculative development. However, with the imminent extension of the tenants' consultation provisions of the 1980 Housing Act to Northern Ireland, a related option appeared - to

package the privatisation "solution" as a tenants' participation project. The problem for the Housing Executive was, as an unelected bureaucracy under the direction of the British Government, to establish the legitimacy of its strategy with potentially disruptive tenants' associations.

Indeed, the Housing Executive considered that tenants' associations could assist housing management and were, in fact, more useful than councillors who were "just kept informed" and were "just after votes" (347). The joint approach with Meadowbrook Tenants Association had worked well for the Executive; it had been "on their terms". A senior Housing Executive officer explained in the following terms:

"Take Drumbeg. There's no responsible tenants' association so we can't use the same approach as in Meadowbrook. We're at a disadvantage. The motive is self-interest in these exercises. The Executive doesn't have the resources to offer a comprehensive service to individuals. It's struggling to maintain its houses and collect the rent. That's why it's convenient to work with tenants' associations. They're doing work that could be seen as that of the Housing Executive. We have to delegate authority - not responsibility - to them, give them some power. We have to trade off satisfying a tenants association against satisfying an individual tenant. The former always wins - it's good politics ...

It's no answer to bring the Housing Executive and community workers closer together - we must maintain professionalism. Professional community workers are agency bashers. They don't have to make priorities between different areas. To them everything is a priority, but the Executive has to allocate finite resources." (348)

The type of community association that the Housing Executive appeared to be looking to encourage was one which could be incorporated into its housing management strategies. For example, while Craigavon's District Manager described Edenbeg Tenants' Association as "a disaster", a local

community worker described the group as "... very good ... can't be pushed around. They're organising a mass appeal against heating surcharges. They're more middle class and know what they're doing" (349).

The Housing Executive's Regional Director for the Southern Region in which Craigavon was located described heating costs in the new town sector as having "gone through the roof", and was sympathetic to tenants' protests (350). He had unsuccessfully pressed for Craigavon's district heating costs to be treated as a special case by central government. Tenants' associations, he argued, could be vehicles for consultation, but they could be "very self-interested", while the Executive "had to look after the whole". However his view was that the Executive should "give tenants a victory when possible". They had to be sensitive to tenants because the Housing Executive was "an undemocratic quango".

### 8.3 Managing the ghetto

What is being suggested is that one way the Housing Executive responded to the problems it faced with the failure of modernisation was to attempt to incorporate potentially disruptive tenants' associations into "non-political" housing management. This was a very different response compared with Bessemer Park or Peterlee (chapter 4). As noted in chapter 2, the situation was different in Northern Ireland because the Housing Executive had been created to "take housing out of politics" (351). But while this was originally done to cope with civil unrest, it

became an accepted feature of housing policy in Northern Ireland and one that has even been suggested as a model for Britain to follow (Brett, 1986, pp. 132-133). This extension of a measure introduced to deal with an "emergency" situation into "normal" social policy has been documented by Ditch and Morrissey (1982), who pay particular attention to the punitive Payment for Debt Act originally introduced to deal with the rent strike against internment in 1971-72, but since used to get the poor to pay their rent and fuel bills - a major reason why attempts to organise a rent strike against the post-1979 rises was so unsuccessful. Housing management in the late 1970s, in fact, became the management of the poor (Singleton, 1986).

The Housing Executive's acceptance of "tenant participation" was associated with its increasing role of managing the poor in an undemocratic system. Interestingly, only a few years previously its chairperson had taken the view that the lack of democracy was a reason why participation could not be accepted:

"A new phrase has recently crept into currency - 'meaningful consultation' - by which those concerned mean 'consultation leading to the outcome we desire'. Any consultation which does not lead to that result is dismissed as cosmetic and 'meaningless' ... Let me make it plain that I am much in favour of tenant participation in any reasonably democratic, united and homogeneous society. But in a community which is deeply divided, it poses extreme dangers. There is the recurrent fear that paramilitary organisations may, through unassailable spokesmen, gain control of tenant committees ... "

(Brett, 1986, pp. 118-119).

However, prompted by the extension of the 1980 Housing Act's "Tenants' Charter" to Northern Ireland, and the willingness of a number of

voluntary organisations to implement participation strategies for the Housing Executive, it changed its approach, as the following account by a senior housing officer describes:

"In the early 1970s tenants' opinions about houses being uninhabitable couldn't be accepted. But we're involved in a psychological war and had to keep up the spirits of the tenants. Good housing management looks at what peoples' needs are, but we don't wash our dirty linen in public. The Executive makes representations to the Government for funds based on these needs ... I'm in favour of strong tenants' associations as consultative vehicles. Then we don't have to deal with individuals. But the Executive must watch for political motives, like councillors getting at the state." (352)

Pressure grew for an initiative in Craigavon. In 1982 Craigavon Borough Council's Public Health Department served a formal Abatement Notice on the Housing Executive under the 1978 Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order, a move that would not have been possible in Britain because these two functions - public health and housing - were carried out by the same authority, the local council. Craigavon's decision followed preparation of a report which concluded that Rathmore, Ridgeway and Legahory Green constituted health hazards (353). The following week the Health Minister toured the area (354).

Various strategies were considered by the Housing Executive Board. Their main concern was the unpopularity of much of the housing and the very high level of voids. A Board paper explained that a waiting list for housing in the area existed despite this problem because:

"these applicants have either been made numerous offers of accommodation or await a particular house in a popular area.

Generally their points levels are so low that the applicant can afford to await the house of his choice." (355)

The paper stated that Brownlow had the highest tenancy termination rate in Northern Ireland, including a high proportion of "moonlight flits". It took the view that although Brownlow's stock of family housing was inappropriate against growing needs for small units, the area served a useful province-wide function as temporary housing (what critics called a "dumping ground"). It was suggested that this would include those waiting to buy or who were "transient by nature". However, a significant increase in Brownlow's housing surplus was predicted. There was a problem of long-term tenants moving out to the private sector, and of some properties that had been let to the security forces being vacated. The paper argued that the district heating issue had to be tackled urgently, and tenants' views on this were accepted. Although it was recommended that the paper be presented to Craigavon Borough Council and Brownlow Community Council, the only role for tenants' groups which appeared in the paper was the improvement of security on the estates. The recommended strategy was (i) the demolition of Ridgeway; (ii) the consolidation of other problem areas, except for Rathmore (where most of the houses lay vandalised) and Legahory Green, whose future was to be kept under review; (iii) sixty per cent sales discounts; (iv) homesteading and (v) equity sharing. The emphasis was on privatising as much of the stock as possible.

There followed implementation of a "Priority Estates" programme for Brownlow's ten emptiest estates, involving cheap sales of vacant

property with repair grants, funding for the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT) to appoint a Development Officer as an "honest broker" between tenants' groups and the Executive, and the direct appointment of a Strategy Co-ordinator. Brownlow Community Council was recognised as an umbrella body for tenants' groups. The most defective houses, the 192 derelict and extensively vandalised units in Ridgeway, only twelve years old and with considerable debts remaining on them, were sold to private developers at a reputed £500 per house and demolished for redevelopment (356).

The Housing Executive wanted to encourage the social proletariat of Brownlow to organise into groups with which it could work. The fact that local community workers were not doing that, but supporting more conflictive community action, appeared to be linked to the appointment from outside the area of the Development Officer, paid for by the Housing Executive but actually employed by a voluntary organisation, the NIVT (357). As part of the strategy, Brownlow Community Council was assisted with the drawing up of a document called Brownlow Matters - the tenants' view on Brownlow. This outlined the main problems of the area and pressed for local participation in decisions affecting the whole of Brownlow, rather than the selective participation with tenants in "problem estates" - now termed "priority estates" by the Housing Executive - which the Housing Executive was pursuing. Although it sharply criticised the Housing Executive's "Craigavon Strategy", the Executive accommodated it by setting up a "joint management agreement" with Brownlow Community Council.



The priority estates programme involved redirecting funds for normal improvement work on Housing Executive stock to these priority estates, with a view to selling off as much of the housing as possible to relieve its housing management costs to the Executive (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 1983a). This sparked off complaints from estates without high numbers of vacancies, and hence not priority estates, that maintenance and improvement work was being cut where tenants had kept estates in good order to make available funds to prepare vacant properties for sale (358). Considerable resources were put into various privatisation measures, including "homesteading", improvement for sale and equity sharing schemes. The Housing Executive stated that consultation and participation were "crucial to the success of the strategy" (359).

Amid the implementation of this strategy rent rises across the province continued. Local politicians were not impressed and argued that the rents were too high for the use value of much of the housing in the new town sector and that:

"... it was a ridiculous situation where people in Craigavon were asked to subsidise a building programme when there was an abundance of houses in the area." (360)

In April 1982 Craigavon Borough Council adopted a motion calling for a rents freeze and more central government investment in housing improvements (361). The council decided that an all-party delegation should meet the Environment Minister. The following week a decision was made to establish a Housing Liaison Committee "to make the Executive

more sensitive to people on the ground", but this was dominated by unionist politicians (362). The recently-formed Craigavon Housing Action Group, with its main base in the new town sector, demanded a rent freeze for three years and more public investment to take the burden of maintenance and new build off rents. It organised a series of protests to highlight what amounted to a 380 per cent rise in rents since 1977 (363). The issue attracted all-party support. The Action Group put forward proposals for reforming housing finance, policy, investment and tenant participation. A few tenant activists were vociferous about the rent rises, claiming that nothing was being done about slow and inefficient maintenance and management services. However, once again the rents campaign failed to take off and the Action Group's protests were not well attended.

The Housing Executive's Twelfth Annual Report (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 1983b) located the Brownlow problem in terms the legacy of modernisation. There had been an "over provision" of public sector housing as levels of employment fell. The Executive's "biggest headache" was Craigavon, although the problem was also threatening the other growth centres of the 1960s - Antrim, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus. Combined with Conservative Government policies to stimulate the private sector, the situation led to a scaling down of Housing Executive new build targets (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 1983a; see chapter 2). The Executive's policy for Craigavon was partly modelled on the British "priority estates" initiatives, involving physical improvements, locally-based housing management, tenant consultation and tighter security in estates with high numbers of

vacancies (Birrell, 1986). The main emphasis, however, was on privatisation. This sales strategy was implemented without prior consultation with tenants, whose role was limited to consultation about low-level housing management matters through Brownlow Community Council.

It was suggested above that local community workers in Craigavon were, in essence, displaced by a Development Officer whose remit was to organise tenants according to the management needs of the Housing Executive. Two local community workers, Acheson and Carolan (1984), evaluated Brownlow's early priority estates experience in an article in the community work review, Scope. They described the background to the Executive's Craigavon Strategy - the costs and inefficiency of the gas heating systems, housing design and finish defects, dampness, maintenance, transfer requests and allocations, and tenant agitation about these issues. They concluded that the strategy had:

"achieved a degree of ventilation of tenants' feelings and small-scale improvements in management practice." (p. 6)

The sales policy predominated over participation, which in any case only ever involved a very small proportion of the tenants. The main interest in the Craigavon Strategy came from potential house purchasers (364).

#### 8.4 Summary and conclusions

It has been argued that Craigavon new town was created as part of a wider strategy of reproducing the working class for capital in what

turned out to be unstable transnational outposts. When the transnationals did not invest on the scale planned for, and when those that did come pulled out, the state had to manage large numbers of workless tenants and empty houses. It is argued that the "logic" of the system in which both the state and the working class were located demanded strategies to reproduce people within the wage labour-capital relationship, including the reproduction of those forced out of work as a "less eligible" social proletariat. As Byrne (1986) proposes, strategies of control are the logical consequence of post-modernism's failure to deliver the reforms that seemed to be possible during the modernisation era. These strategies can range from the deliberate participation strategy the Housing Executive introduced to manage the crisis in Brownlow to the exclusion of tenants from access to the local state which occurred in Peterlee and Bessemer Park. The generative processes are very similar, despite the differences in civil society and state-civil society relations described.

Craigavon appears unique because of the emphasis often put on its sectarian origins: its location "East of the Bann", its name and the choice of the Commission's first chairperson, the windfall land profits made by the large Unionist landowners and the costs borne by the small farmers. However, the ways in which new town planning has actually reinforced subregional uneven development, excluded the working class and involved clientelist relationships between the local state and big capital have been documented for several British new towns (Robinson, 1983; Mullan, 1980; Austrin and Beynon, 1979; Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, pp. 214-222). The capitalist determinants which shaped

planning in Northern Ireland and Britain appeared broadly similar, as did the working class experiences of modernisation and restructuring - processes in which the political leaderships in the two areas were implicated.

The growth of stagnant reserve armies of labour - or a social proletariat - with the deindustrialisation of the growth centres met in both County Durham and North Armagh with sporadic and weak community action which was either ignored or incorporated. It was suggested in chapter 1 that reproductive strategies in the early post-modern era have been part of a "two nations" project which the central state has played the determining role in shaping. In housing, the main locale for the reproduction of the "second nation" became state housing, much of which was built during the "one nation" era of modernisation but was subsequently residualised as the importance of these localities in global accumulation reduced. The working class experience of Craigavon, as with County Durham's growth centres, appears as shaped by the need for the capitalist state to reproduce the class within capitalism, as wage labour or as a reserve army. In Northern Ireland reproductive processes take place in relation to a deeply divided working class in which disproportionately large numbers of catholic workers make up the social proletariat which occupied much of Brownlow's housing. However, growing numbers of protestants were also marginalised by urban decline, and in Craigavon the Borough Council began to respond to this by, for example, supporting campaigns against rent rises.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

In chapter 1 it was proposed that the problem of community action about housing and planning issues in County Durham and North Armagh might start to be explained in terms of the experience in civil society of "modernisation". Community action arose in response to a certain type of state intervention in civil society in certain localities. This intervention was based upon strategies of spatial restructuring, with the creation of growth centres, the production of mass housing, redevelopment and the marginalisation and decline of small communities outside the growth areas. The local state in both sub-regions undertook planning strategies based on ideas about the proper spatial arrangement of urban centres under a regime of "Fordist" accumulation by transnationals, or "organised capitalism". Housing provision was designed to accommodate labour pools in these centres.

It was argued that the dominant political ideology of the "modernisation era" was "one nation" social democratic corporatism, or the Keynesian Welfare State. The modernisation wrought by planning and housing policy, and the strategy's subsequent demise, was not confined to North East England and Northern Ireland; inspection of the literature suggests it was a common experience in the old industrial regions of the UK periphery (for example, see Rees and Lambert (1981) on South Wales; Mooney (1987) on the Glasgow region; and Lloyd and Reeve (1982) on North West England) but few studies examine the working class experience in

detail. Indeed, "modernisation" sums up many aspects of urban and regional policy throughout the UK during the era of "organised" capitalism (see Lash and Urry, 1987; Rees and Lambert, 1985).

In the same way that modernisation was imposed on many localities, the transition to post-modernism necessitated the imposition of new policies from the top. In County Durham and North Armagh the failure of modernisation strategy in housing and planning during the 1970s saw the adoption of policies to contain state expenditures and expand the sphere of circulation. In County Durham mounting local-central government tensions and conflicts were evident as the long period of growing local expenditures came to an end. In both regions, central government imposed pressures and controls on the direction of local policies to achieve a transition from modernisation. The scope and influence of strategic planning by the local state was curtailed, and housing policy effectively "nationalised" (see Murie, 1985; Grant and Healey, 1985). These developments appeared to be linked to the strategy of expanding circulation and means of self-help in areas where central government considered that the market and self-reliance had been undermined by too great a degree of state provision, crowding out "entrepreneurialism" and taxing profits. The strengthening of central control and increased flexibility in housing and planning towards needs of private capital appear to be responses to the "disorganising" of capitalism which has followed the "organised" accumulation regime of the modernisation era. Although it was beyond the scope of the present thesis to investigate these basal changes in detail, considerable

evidence in support of the "disorganisation thesis" is presented by Lash and Urry (1987).

The recommodification of housing was a particularly important aspect of the end of modernisation. Indeed, there appeared to be a general transition within policies of reproduction from their overall dominance in economic and social development to a more residual role in which reproducing the social proletariat (marginalised sections of the working class which expanded in the depressed growth centres of County Durham and North Armagh during the 1970s) came to dominate many of the functions of the local state. These processes are referred to as "early post-modern" processes, and Jessop's (1982, pp. 244-245) concept of "two nations" strategy is employed to describe the political project under post-modernism: differentiation of the working class and of consumption experiences, and reproduction of - in broad brush terms - a core of relatively affluent workers with continuous employment and a periphery of the unwaged or low paid.

The attempt to develop County Durham and North Armagh within a "one nation strategy" by removing "slums" and building "new communities" in modern environments failed as these new centres deindustrialised after a short period of accumulation. Large numbers of workers in the growth centres became members of the "second nation" of the early post-modern era, defined by both economic marginalisation and their dependence on residualised state provision. The struggles against modernisation in the old neighbourhoods of Railway Street or the Category "D" villages were in an important sense struggles against state housing as it had



become in the modern era. Much of it had always been unpopular with regard to its form and location, but at the end of modernisation other problems emerged making it "difficult-to-live-in". Some of these struggles were successful because of the alternatives offered by post-modern developments, principally working class home ownership and housing associations/cooperatives. The Housing Corporation, the public local inquiry as an instrument of national policy, and the Priority Estates Project were enabling structures biased towards certain forms of social action, particularly privatisation and self-help. This structural transformation of means of reproduction was central to answering "how it happened" questions about the community action studied. But this is only a relatively low level of explanation. In particular, the question arises as to the nature of reproductive responses by the state; the restructuring of reproduction was not a straightforward functional process.

Easington, for example, adopted privatisation partly because of support for working class home ownership and partly because of the scale of pressures on its management and maintenance expenditure (chapter 4). Derwentside and Durham City's housing policies continued the historical commitment of the local Labour Parties to council housing and removing old working class terraces from the housing stock (chapters 5 and 6). Wear Valley, under the influence of the scale of opposition to Category "D", decided to retain older private housing and avoided "post-modern" conflicts of the types documented in Framwellgate Moor and Langley Park (chapter 3). Responses to defective modern state housing differed according to the possibility for local people of "escape" within the

district; in Peterlee there were few alternatives, and most of the houses had to be refurbished - a long, disruptive and expensive process for the tenants (chapter 4). In Spennymoor and Craigavon there was alternative housing available, and large-scale demolition of modern, non-traditional mass housing that could not attract tenants occurred (chapters 4 and 8). To varying degrees, depending on local circumstances, community participation approaches were employed. They were most advanced in Brownlow, where a privatisation package was implemented partly under the guise of a tenant participation strategy to improve the housing.

The case studies were accounts of what chapter 1 conceptualised as a "contest of domains" between the local state and local civil society over reproductive policy in housing and planning. As was noted above, these struggles could have an effect on policy, but did not have a generative effect. Rather, the case studies showed how modernisation was a process with a subject, that subject being the working class. Working class people were not reduced to the träger of modernisation, but often acted to obstruct and resist it. One form this took was sporadic community action. However, it has been argued in the present thesis that a determining pressure on the development and form of reproductive responses by the state, and working class reactions to them, was the logic of capitalist process. The purpose of chapter 2 was to propose a framework which located community action in terms of the expression of capitalist processes in local housing and planning policy, while recognising that aspects of modernisation were accommodations of class conflict. The latter helps to explain why local councils in

County Durham continued to attempt to implement modernist housing policies, which were aimed at a qualitative transformation of working class housing, despite the demise of the dominance of modernisation in the management strategies of capital and the national state, and thus the end of any capitalist rationale for modernisation. These policies became very difficult to sustain during the latter 1970s due to central government controls and pressures. It also helps to understand aspects of modernisation, in its dominant and residual forms, in North Armagh, where the strategy was in large measure aimed at meeting the state's legitimisation needs. But the expansion of output of state housing during the "modernisation era", in which the needs of capital were dominant, was associated with changes in its style and locational features compared with early council housing, and in the process state housing was considerably discredited as a means of "modernising" working class housing conditions.

Chapter 1 discussed the usefulness of realist method as an heuristic device in analysis, especially its treatment of social phenomena as mediated expressions of central capitalist mechanisms or "system forces" at particular general economic, political and ideological conjunctures. In the present thesis, a framework has been proposed which suggests a level of process relating to international/centralist forces, particularly the strategies of transnationals, mediated at the level of local politics and local conditions, producing variation in how the pressures generated by these forces worked out at a concrete level in local areas. It should be emphasised, however, that what is being dealt with here is history and inevitably approaching history from a realist

position involves considering structure, in the sense of conceptualisations of necessary, internal relations in particular, as well as evidence - the oral history and documentary material collected in the course of the research (see Sayer, 1984, pp. 79-107). In this way "structures" suggested by theory and other knowledge about advanced capitalism are brought into analysis. The evidence is used to interrogate these concepts. As Abrams (1982, p. 335) concludes, historical sociology involves a "negotiation" between "great abstract drama" and "telling it as it was" - between theory and concept, and action and experience. In this way, the purpose of critical social science is to analyse

"... the real relationships of inequality hidden within the apparently natural market laws and political arrangements associated with capitalism; an attempt to unmask the facts of man-made (sic) exploitation behind the illusion of an externally given economy ... (But) the forms of the division of labour and of ownership and inequality do not march blindly through history with a momentum of their own. Specific modes of production and specific forms of inequality are actively made or not made by specific historical actors in specific historical settings." (Abrams, 1982, pp. 41, 39; parentheses added)

It is argued that the case studies have shown significant aspects of the ways in which generative mechanisms were mediated by the values and actions of social actors both in the local state and in local civil society. In County Durham actors in the struggles against spatial restructuring and redevelopment in the old pit villages and in the larger Category "A" settlements of Langley Park and Framwellgate Moor often conceived of the local state as the "Labour Party machine". This was an institution of dominance along the officialdom-people axis,

controlled by political leaders whose organic links with the communities under threat had been undermined by corporatist reorganisations of the local state, but who had a "vision" of progress based on modernisation and the eradication of "slums". In North Armagh the dominance of catholics in the communities threatened by restructuring, and in the social proletariat which became trapped in the new town sector, meant that the local council failed to support or actually obstructed a number of local projects and campaigns. However, it had no major powers, and community action about housing generally engaged directly with the Housing Executive - a "non-political" body which, faced with a management problem of very large proportions, moved to establish a direct relationship with local residents whom it attempted to organise while pursuing a privatisation package.

The fieldwork and historical investigations were carried out in several "localities" which were where restructuring processes were experienced by residents and where community action occurred. It is clear from the case studies, however, that the central mechanisms producing the changes which threatened or occurred in these localities involved wider processes linked to local-central state politics and, above all, strategies to manage reproduction which appeared to be linked to dominant regimes of accumulation. These processes were experienced most directly in localities, with different physical characters and social compositions. These characters and compositions were contingent factors. The fact that, for example, Railway Street was a "near slum" and that the residents had the resources to organise themselves and struggle to save the Street did not cause the community action there,

although it would almost certainly not have happened without these contingent conditions. What caused it were decisions taken by the local council which were products of a historically determined commitment to "modernising" housing policy, and what resolved it was the decision taken by central government which was a product of its early post-modern strategy, namely a reduction of the local state's direct role in reproduction. In other areas threatened with clearance there was no community action, but as a consequence of the Railway Street Public Inquiry these areas were likely to be retained and improved as well. As Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, p. 248) put it:

"Events are caused by generative mechanisms (determination), but because these are activated by combination with contingent relations, the actual concrete outcome is not pre-determined (determinism) ... (I)t remains logically possible that the whole world will change, and so change what are necessary generative mechanisms ..."

While these authors give capitalism as an example of one already created world, it might be argued that within capitalism modernism was a created world in the economies and politics of County Durham and North Armagh, and that this world changed with the transition to early post-modernism. Lash and Urry's (1987) work is very explicit about this, providing detailed accounts of the dimensions of a transition from "organised" to "disorganised" capitalism in all Western nations resulting in fundamental basal and cultural changes, although with important cross-national differences deriving particularly from the histories of organisation at the bottom (among labour) and at top (among capital). Thus, certain hallmarks characterise advanced capitalism, such as a

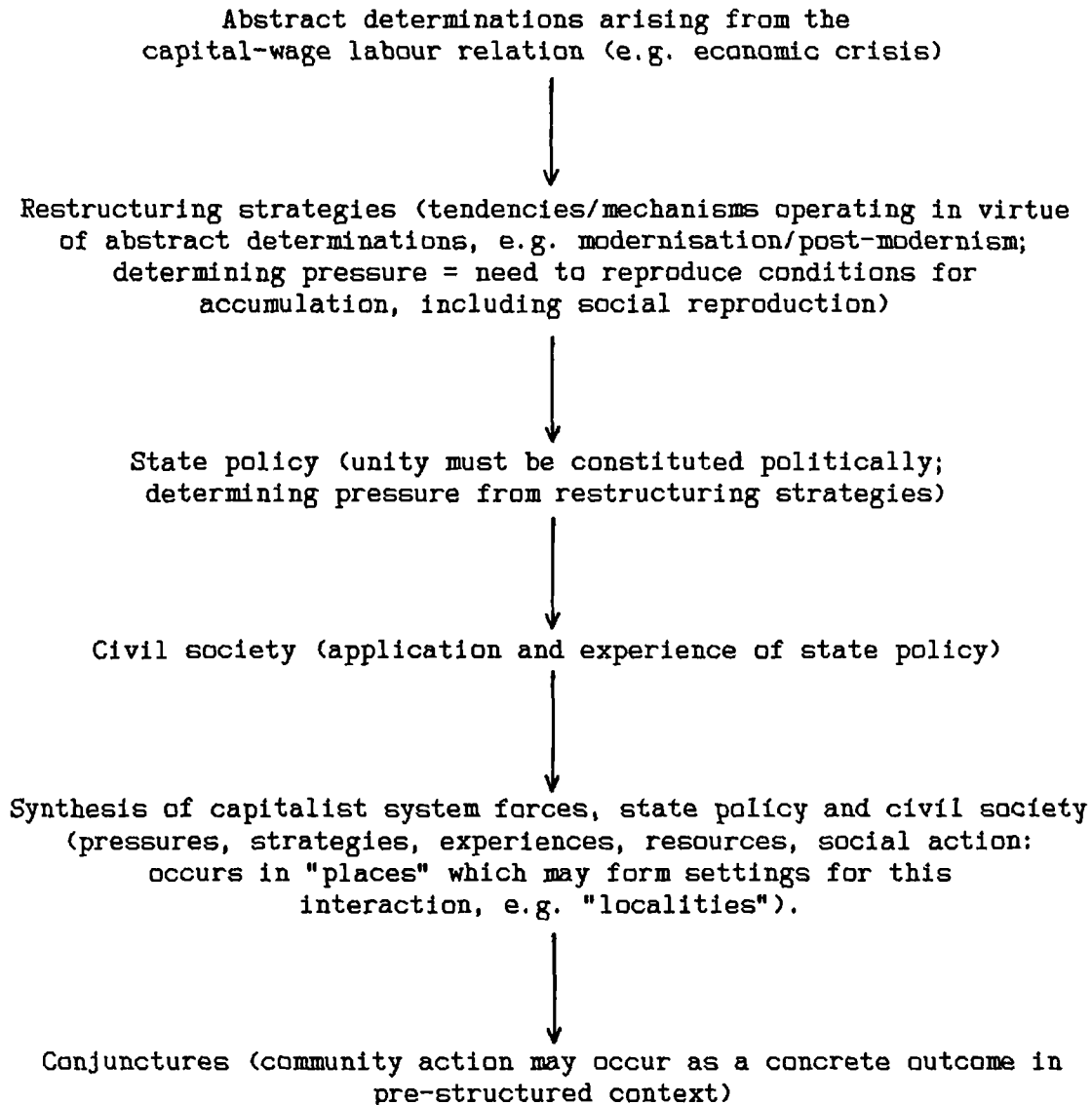
complex division of labour whose product is expropriated by owners of the means of production to realise surplus value, an occupationally-based stratification system derived from the workers' degree of centrality in accumulation/reproduction, and procedures for obtaining social integration (adapted from Abrams, 1982, p. 21). But the forms of these basic features appear significantly different in the era of "modernisation" or "organised" capitalism compared with the era of "post-modernism" or "disorganised" capitalism; for example, "the decline in the significance of a distinctively proletarian pattern of life from the 1950s onwards, a pattern focused on trade unionism, the Labour Party, the co-operative, particular forms of holiday, recreation, cultural practice, and so on" (Lash and Urry, 1987, p. 211). The structural features of this transition have not been a central concern of the present thesis (on this, work is only just beginning, but see Gough (1986); Armstrong, Glyn and Harrison (1984); Scott and Storper (1986); Harvey (1987); Sayer, 1986; Holloway, 1987; as well as Lash and Urry, 1987). What has been noted is the apparent "logic" of housing and planning policies in County Durham and North Armagh during the post-war economic expansion, which derives from their relationship to a "Fordist" regime of "organised" accumulation by transnationals, and the different "logic" of policies which were put in place at the end of this period of expansion during deindustrialisation/disorganisation and the rise of flexible accumulation. It appears more accurate, however, to conceptualise these phases as strategies, an approach which recent work on modern/post-modern economic restructuring would seem to support.

While it was argued in chapter 2 that the transition from modern to post-modern housing and planning strategy can be conceptualised at a high level of abstraction as a tendency operating in virtue of changes in the system forces of capitalism (themselves outcomes of struggle about the capital-wage labour relation), modernist/post-modern policies were also determining mechanisms, albeit at a lower level of abstraction. This method of analysis avoids the error of explaining the "real-concrete" at the level of appearances, while failing to examine the more abstract determinations (a criticism that can be applied to Dennis' (1970; 1972) work on redevelopment in Sunderland). The transition from "modern" to "early post-modern" reproductive strategies in County Durham and North Armagh appears as an effect of the economic crisis which began in the late 1960s (Gough, 1986). In housing and planning it involved the nationally imposed recommodification of housing and a new "entrepreneurial" and flexible emphasis in planning (Ball, 1983, pp. 241-271; Harloe, 1981). The plural nature of the capitalist state meant that the transition was not determined in the determinist mechanical sense, but determined by pressures generated by wider system forces in the capitalist economy and central state (Jessop, 1982, p. 222; Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, p. 248; Williams, 1973). An attempt to portray the process is shown in figure 9.1. This is obviously schematic and an attempt to order the conclusions of the thesis so far about the processes involved in producing events in time and space at different scales by organising them from the most abstract (processes at the highest level of determination) to particular concrete outcomes.



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Figure 9.1 PROCESSES WHICH MAY GENERATE COMMUNITY ACTION IN COUNTY DURHAM AND NORTH ARMAGH



As considered above, the processes suggested in figure 9.1 will be contingently related and concrete outcomes cannot be taken as pre-determined (they will depend on, for example, political unity or the availability of resources for community action). The generalisation

entailed has not permitted distinguishing between, for instance, the national state, with its primary orientation to the management of the UK economy within the world economy, and the local state - local government and administration - with its prime orientation to social reproduction, bringing it into very close contact with civil society. In addition, the outcome of conjunctures at specific local levels may have a determining effect on policies and practices at more general levels, and it is not considered essential to move only one way through the levels (see Gregson, 1987, p. 81).

Although the community action studied in the present thesis was, at a more concrete level, a "contest of domains" between the local state and local civil society, the struggles may be analysed at more abstract levels at which the role of national/international restructuring strategies becomes clearer and indeed a crucial part of explanation. For example, the increasing extent of local state intervention in civil society from the 1930s largely derives from the important role of the local state in the modernisation required by organised capitalism, when the sphere of reproduction was dominant and local state expenditures were expanding. In the early post-modern era of disorganising capitalism the sphere of circulation has been expanding to commodify areas which could yield surplus value, and the role of the local state has consequently been reduced, or restructured, as in the increasing emphasis on supporting local private enterprise in planning departments (see Loughlin, Gelfand and Young, 1985). The interventions by local councils in Framwellgate Moor and Railway Street took place as if wider conditions were still "modern", with a social democratic party in

central government, a unified and organised labour movement and industrial growth. In fact, as shown, wider conditions were "early post-modernist". Figure 9.2 takes this further by classifying the cases of community action studied according to the nature of these processes.

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Figure 9.2 CLASSIFICATION OF CASES OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN COUNTY DURHAM AND NORTH ARMAGH

Restructuring strategy (national/international) state/capital	Modernist	Early post-modern	Early post-modern
Reproductive strategy (local state)	Modernist	Modernist	Early post-modern
	Category "D" struggles	Framwellgate Moor	Brownlow
		Railway Street	Bessemer Park
	Montaighs	Lurgan	Peterlee

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Figure 9.2 shows that the local state continued modernist policy after it had been succeeded at the levels of the national state/international capital by post-modernism. However, as described in the case studies, the pressures on the local state to conform to post-modernism were difficult to resist, given the political subordination of the local state to central government. This was the case in state housing, where sufficient resources were not made available to continue modernisation. The demolition of Bessemer Park, preceded by an unsuccessful community development exercise, is considered a post-modern solution, as are Brownlow and Peterlee where privatisation and demolition were the fate of much of the "modern" stock. At local level autonomy was subject to

top-down integrative forces which tightly constrained the available options. At a lower level, autonomy in civil society was also subject to such top-down integration. For example, while the residents of Railway Street won the "freedom" to improve or sell their homes at a profit, there was no equivalent "freedom" for many of the tenants of Brownlow or Peterlee. Autonomy was conditional, and largely depended on the dominant reproductive strategy.

Parson (1986) suggests that the struggle for "autonomy" explains, and justifies from a radical socialist viewpoint, community action about "statist" housing policy. He writes:

"The point that is to be made here is that, both in theory and in practice, the democratic state (sic) is often antithetical to the diverse needs and desires of autonomous movements. In order to protect historical working class gains (e.g. public housing) from the state of the right, the progressive state often adopts authoritarian and oppressive measures. In so doing the state services not its clientele but its programs. In addition, when autonomous movements are integrated within state policy, their ability to experiment with alternatives is sharply curtailed by being required to participate in (democratic) statist structures." (p. 7; parenthesis added)

The most "autonomous" struggle in the case studies was the successful attempt by a group of Railway Street residents to establish a housing co-operative rather than be rehoused in state housing (chapter 5).

However, this "alternative" was dependent on state support in the form of the Housing Corporation - the struggle is more accurately analysed as one against modernism which found its resolution through an institution of early post-modernism, the Housing Corporation (which was established in 1964 and considerably expanded during the 1970s as an early post-

modern alternative to council housing). In Framwellgate Moor "autonomy" appeared to be interpreted by local residents as laissez-faire in the housing market, even though the housing market is itself underpinned by state interventions, but they were in a potentially favourable market situation. By contrast, in the struggles in modern mass state housing described in chapters 4 and 8, what was demanded was more, not less, state action, although with demands for more accountability to tenants.

In capitalist societies, "anti-statist" struggles, which include the type of struggles against modernisation examined in the present thesis, have frequently entailed resorting to self-help or market "solutions" which, because they are likely to lower the cost to capital of reproducing the working class and to expand the sphere of circulation, are actively supported by the early post-modern capitalist state. The only alternative is to obtain control of capital. Thus, the "successes" of anti-statist struggles in the post-modern phase should be understood in terms of the accommodation of this action within post-modern institutions such as mass owner-occupation, housing associations, housing trusts, etc. In other words, how housing is consumed is closely related to how the state organises reproduction. This might be put as follows. The reaction against modernisation generated a base of support for post-modernism in terms of a self/other opposition to its domination of civil society (see Therborn, 1980, pp. 27-28). How this was expressed in concrete outcomes depended on the opportunities available, especially the means of reproduction. Thus, the social policies of the Thatcherite state were crucial in enabling some actions and suppressing others. But this says little about the motivation behind action. In

relation to the problem of the present thesis, this has been proposed as reaction to modernisation. Politically, this could have been responded to differently and certainly did not imply only a "free market/strong state" solution. For example, Lash and Urry (1987, pp. 299-300) write:

"Postmodern ideology, on its negative side, its new-bourgeois side, is pre-eminently consistent with Thatcherism, Reaganism and, among the masses, with what Stuart Hall has called 'authoritarian populism'. On its positive side it is antihierarchical and consistent with principles of radical democracy. It may have played a significant role in fostering the shopfloor revolts in Britain and elsewhere of the late 1960s and early 1970s, whose decentralized ethos was radical-democratic rather than simply class-ideological. A radical-democratic ethos is shared by the various new social movements ... (I)t would seem that strategies for a reconstituted left political culture, in an age of disorganizing capitalist societies, will have to take, if not take on, postmodernism very seriously indeed."

It is difficult to find any examples of successful community action against "statism" during the height of the modernisation era in County Durham and North Armagh. In fact, the frequent failures to stop modernisation provided national political leaders with examples to legitimate new post-modern housing policies at national level, which were actually more to do with economic pressures than "saving communities" (see chapter 2's discussion of housing policy). Similarly, it is difficult to find examples of successful community action against post-modernism, such as the sale of council houses or the imposition of Urban Development Corporations, during the early post-modern era. This is not to suggest successful opposition is not possible, but that "community action" appears to be generally a weak, relatively easily opposed or managed form of struggle on its own. The reason for this is largely explained by the extent to which first modernisation and then

early post-modernism extended into practices and experiences in civil society to incorporate or oppose them. Indeed, Frankel (1987) goes as far as to argue that this process means that "civil society" does not exist as a separate sphere:

"(T)he struggle between social movements and traditional political processes is erroneously depicted as the struggle of 'civil society against the state'. This is because new social movement theorists do not adequately differentiate between 'the state' in the narrow sense of political administration (that is, government by freely elected ministers, one party dictators or military-bureaucratic regimes), and state institutions in the larger sense as part of what is called 'civil society', for example, the vital educational, social welfare, transport, media and other national and local services ..." (pp. 234-235; stress added)

However, in another passage Frankel refers to "the state-organized socio-economic and cultural practices which constitute an indispensable part of the contemporary social reproduction of everyday life" (p. 205), implying the existence of an "everyday life" that has to be reproduced by the exercise of state power, i.e. it will not reproduce itself according to the needs of the wider system. Thus, it is difficult to discount altogether the existence of a separate domain of social life outside "the state" and other dominant institutions, even though the state has penetrated this domain on a large scale. As Williams (1973, p. 11) observes:

"... I am sure that it is true of the society that has come into existence since the last war, that progressively, because of developments in the social character of labour, in the social character of communications, and in the social character of decision, it extends much further than ever before in capitalist society into certain hitherto resigned areas of experience and practice and meaning ... A meaning or a practice may be tolerated as a deviation, and yet still be seen only as another particular way to live. But as the necessary area of effective dominance extends, the

same meanings and practices can be seen by the dominant culture, not merely as disregarding or despising it, but as challenging it."

The state is the most important means by which effective dominance is extended, even if this is done by facilitating the dominance of large corporations over their workforces, or the dominance of large private investors over local government. During the modernisation era effective dominance was achieved through social democratic reformism and class co-operation. Issues concerning the operation of the capitalist economy were translated into social issues. For example, Dunleavy (1981) shows that industrial decline was translated into a social problem to be tackled through housing policy as "a quick technological fix"; in other words, "modernisation". He writes:

"The distribution of people between areas of good housing and the 'slums' was marked by a profound class cleavage, a cleavage which, combined with the gross disparities in housing amenities involved, posed a major threat to the social formation and the legitimacy of the state." (p. 101)

Plant (1983, p. 19) makes a similar point when he argues that the political costs of disaffection and violence, real or imagined, have led one-nation Tories to reject neo-liberal monetarism. Even the Thatcherite two-nation strategy involves responding with state programmes to inner-city decay and Northern Ireland. Gaffikin and Mooney (1987, pp. 68-70) employ the term "regressive modernisation" to describe these programmes, an alternative term to "post-modernism":

"It is regressive because on the one hand, and in reaction to the current period of crisis, uncertainty and disruptive social change, we are encouraged to seek refuge and security in the values and



images of the past. However, on the other hand, we are simultaneously being seduced by the values and images of a 'modern' and 'progressive' world ... The recent proliferation of neo-vernacular styles - that is the return to traditional housing design in Belfast - in new public sector housing illustrates how architectural design has been employed to address problems which go far beyond the bounds of aesthetic preferences. This follows wider trends in Britain, and is a reaction to the perceived failure of modernism in all its forms ... At its most basic, we are being further persuaded into the dominant culture of Thatcher's Britain. This is a culture which has not only provided fresh moral legitimacy for the primacy of profit, but which has extended the rules and values of the market into previously unpenetrated territory."

Lash and Urry (1987, pp. 285-300) argue that the consumption of images, or the role of imagery in social reproduction, has become of major significance in "disorganised" (or "post-modern") capitalism. However, imagery was also a feature of modernisation, as has been referred to at various points in the present thesis. Gaffikin and Mooney (1987, pp. 65-66) address this very well as follows:

"Expressions and images can readily change the terms of the planning debate. Back in the late sixties in Belfast what had been customarily described as 'neat little terraces' in a city of villages very quickly became 'slums' in urgent need of demolition. The old way of life was to change. It was presented as inadequate in the modern age. Rather, new bright houses in the growth centres or radically different housing forms in-situ could provide all the amenities that were lacking in the inner city. The image was important. It displayed clean, modern materials, geometric forms and open spaces and it represented the possibility of an improved way of life."

The suggestion here is that different accumulation strategies generate different imageries which signify dominant ideologies that contribute to reproducing these strategies. The imagery changes as basal changes occur, and these basal changes are themselves used to justify moving on to a new language and new visual metaphors.

Panitch (1986a) points out that social democratic reformism appeared only to be able to keep its direction and popular support as long as capital would support it. He argues that the economic crisis at the end of this period, and the political counter-attack on social democratic reformism which was image-laden, shows how dependent the latter was on meeting the requirements of capital as to when and where it would invest. The counter-attack was legitimated on grounds that reforms, and local autonomy, have to be re-examined when they start scaring business away. But there is another, perhaps more important, possible reason why the transition was not widely resisted and was, in fact, relatively popular among some sections of the population. This was the negative experience of state authority under modernism which occurred above all in the creation of "modern" built environments. The struggles against modernisation described in this thesis went beyond the routine experience of the state to expose more explicitly the nature of popular exclusion from its agencies and of officialdom-people relations of domination. There is evidence that this routine experience is often one of antagonism (see, for example, Hyde and Deacon, 1986) but above all it seems to be one which precludes or defuses collective action (Kraushaar, 1981). Thus, where collective action occurs it is of particular interest in revealing aspects of the nature of the capitalist state.

Figure 9.3 indicates with regard to the particular cases of community action studied how important selective state intervention was in managing local conflicts, and how dominant intervention was concordant with dominant restructuring strategies.

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Figure 9.3 OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN COUNTY DURHAM AND N. ARMAGH

Category "D" struggles	"Spatial coalitions" modify County Council strategy; central intervention shifts it to post-modern strategy.
Bessemer Park	County Council implements "community development" which fails; District Council decides to demolish modern estate.
Peterlee	District Council resists weak tenant mobilisation in problematic modern housing. Some local incorporation of tenants where appropriate to the council's needs. Privatisation and demolition of state housing.
Railway Street	Modernist intervention by District fails with residents able to benefit from post-modern policy, including Housing Corporation and central government intervention by public inquiry, which was decisive.
Framwellgate Moor	Modernist intervention by District Council gradual to avoid public inquiry but frustrated by HIP cuts. Residents excluded from decision-making process.
The Montaighs	Modernist restructuring by local state largely successful; restructuring ends with national transition to early post-modernism.
Lurgan	Modernist intervention by Housing Executive modified by national policy and community action in early post-modern period.
Brownlow	Incorporation of community action by Housing Executive while adjusting to post-modernism. Funded community action concerned with services to marginalised tenants.

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In general, community action in the older private housing areas was stronger and more successful than community action in the modern mass

housing estates. It was suggested at the end of chapter 4 that this might be explained in terms of the "community-based" local civil societies of the former and the "disorganised" civil societies of the latter. However, the chances of success were also different. While residents in older private housing were defending neighbourhoods in a national context which, from the 1970s, emphasised the preservation of such areas, residents in the mass housing estates wanted improvements or rehousing, and a greater say in maintenance and management, when national policy was residualising council housing.

The nature of the national context has been explained in terms of dominant strategies of reproduction, particularly the expansion of circulation, privatisation and self-reliance in the early post-modern era, with the concomitant expansion of appropriate forms of social control and imagery. However, although an important aspect of the community action studied is that it can be classified into two types of "localities" - old private housing and modern mass state housing - a common experience of exclusion in relation to the corporate local state was evident in both types of localities and both case study sub-regions, which has been described in terms of "officialdom-people" relations of domination (Jessop, 1982, pp. 247-252).

In all areas there was a very unequal access to political decision-making by dominant local political institutions, a situation which might be termed "local corporatism" (Villadsen, 1986). As also found by Villadsen (1986), conflict in these situations gave rise to some politicisation, as when Independents stood to oppose Labour candidates

which supported restructuring in County Durham. In Craigavon there was some weak politicisation, mainly early discussions by members of Brownlow Community Council about standing "community candidates", but such developments were less likely with the incorporation of "community leaders" into housing management and the dominance of formal politics by the national question. Villadsen (1986, p. 265) indicates how the fragmentation and differentiation of civil society in "early post-modernism" have been reflected in diverse and fragmented responses to restructuring at local level:

"Tensions and conflicts at the local level have followed politicisation, but they can only be understood in relation to the type of community, i.e. in relation to processes of social and spatial segregation. Actors, networks, forms and issues will vary according to the type of community. So will the extent to which local corporatism can be said to exist."

Does this mean that "consumption sectors" are relevant to explanation, despite the arguments of chapter 1? It is suggested that the answer is that while consumption divisions are significant, consumption relations are made by the organisation of capitalist production and reproduction; they are "basally determined" in the last instance (many aspects of reproduction - such as the built environment - may be conceptualised as components of the base; see Williams, 1973; Ball, 1986). Although there is clearly growing differentiation in reproduction/consumption experiences in early post-modern society, this differentiation is largely a result of the operation of the capitalist economy in any given period, including the nature of production and consumption, and of state reproductive policies. For example, in post-war housing there has

generally been a gradation from high quality owner-occupation for the bourgeoisie and top management to low quality owner-occupation for the low-moderate income working class, and good council housing for the "respectable" better-off working class and bad council housing - flats, maisonnettes and the worst houses - for the "residuum" or social proletariat. Indeed, tenure may not reflect quality: a good semi-detached council house on a garden estate is likely to be rated as superior to a small terraced private house with no garden, even though the former may have sold quickly under the Right to Buy (and transferred into a tenure which distributes housing very regressively). Housing quality appears to reflect, broadly speaking, people's "worth" in terms of their degree of centrality in capitalist processes, although there are many contingent factors (such as spatial variations in the standard of council housing and the housing market). Different "consumption sectors" are products of the economic, ideological and political conditions of a given period, which are created to a large extent by dominant strategies such as modernism and post-modernism. Thus, state housing in the growth centres was intended for "central" workers and planned to provide modern amenities and "good" jobs; working class private housing outside the growth centres was marginalised. In the early post-modern era the position of these tenures changed, so that much mass state housing was marginalised and private housing enhanced.

### 9.1 Statism and housing

In chapter 1 the selection of County Durham and North Armagh as comparative case study areas for an investigation of community action

about housing was justified in terms of a central concern of urban and regional studies: to develop an explanation which relates local particularities to wider generative processes. The wider generative processes have been conceptualised in terms of modernisation and post-modernism. Local particularities have been identified, especially the ideologies of Labourism in County Durham and sectarianism in North Armagh, and the different forms and practices of local government and administration, which were significantly influenced by these ideologies. The case studies are accounts of "contests of domains" between state and civil society. However, if the state plays the crucial role that was suggested in the previous section, does this mean that the fact that the local state in County Durham was directly elected and dominated by a political party which opposed the policies of central government from 1979, while the local state in North Armagh (excluding the weak local government system) comprised unelected agencies of central government, makes no difference to working class experiences?

The answer in one respect lies in the way this oversimplifies the situation: in County Durham Peterlee Development Corporation was a similar institution of the state to Craigavon Development Commission. In addition, as has already been noted, the autonomy of local government in England was severely restricted by interventions and pressures from Thatcher Governments. These features were directly related to the implementation of reproductive strategies from the top. But it is argued that another conclusion may also be drawn. The similarities between County Durham and North Armagh in the experiences of "excluded communities" - areas seen as "backward" in an era of modernisation or

"modern" areas of mass state housing residualised in the early post-modern era - are also associated with a situation where policies formulated democratically (however imperfectly) were implemented bureaucratically.

Rustin (1981) makes some very relevant observations about this. There is a difference between class struggles in civil society and struggles which aim to capture the state apparatus. After the last war, Labourism was preoccupied with the latter (in Northern Ireland, a not dissimilar preoccupation with local state power was evident with regard to the Unionist Party). Rustin argues that this marginalised struggles about the nature of state institutions, and its products such as mass housing, as they were actually experienced and lived in civil society. As a result the base of informed support for collective reforms became narrow, and the ground was prepared for post-modernism as an individualist ideology prevailed in society. Rustin considers that Labourism continued to promulgate policies that homogenized different social identities, including localities, which was particularly damaging to its project in the early post-modern era because of the extent of social, institutional and spatial differentiation arising from the restructuring of production and consumption. It failed to engage with the particularities of civil society. This was reflected in its post-war commitment to modernisation, with the type of consequences that have been described in the case studies of earlier chapters. Rustin (p. 36) concludes.

"The problem of Labourism has been that it has sought the capture of power through the State apparatus, but no fundamental change in the



State apparatus it wishes to capture. Consequently, those subjected to the reforms of Labour Governments have found the particular power relations to which they are subject, whether at the hands of the agencies of central and local government, or of publicly owned enterprises, substantially unmodified. Reforming governments have achieved changes in social provision, a limited redistribution of resources, and an enhancement of the role of State power vis-a-vis market power. But they have not achieved many changes in the relation of citizens to the apparatus of decision-making and power itself."

Given this popular experience, which was extreme in localities such as those of the case studies where restructuring brought the state into close and conflictive contact with civil society, the libertarian ideology of "self-ownership" could be counter-posed to modernism (Cohen, 1985). While this may not give rise to major shifts in political support, it may lead to a feeling that acquiescence to these developments is appropriate because of the failures of modernisation. In housing, the libertarian Right could argue that residents should have the "right" to use freely their dwelling and in particular to improve their situation through their own efforts, and aspects of this approach were incorporated into the 1980 Housing Act, principally the Tenants Charter, the Right to Buy (for both council tenants and the tenants of many housing associations) and changes in conditions for the receipt of renovation grants (see chapter 2). Central to this was the restoration of property rights, which while actually being a means of further extending the sphere of circulation, could be legitimated on the grounds that it stimulates production, protects freedoms and conforms to principles of justice. Cohen's (1986, p. 6) description of libertarian ideology closely resembles the attitudes of residents in Category "D"

villages, the Montaighs, Railway Street and Framwellgate Moor when faced with the modernising state:

"If this is mine, what right has anyone, even the state, to take part of it away from me? And if this is mine, what right has the state, through regulations and directives, to tell me what to do with it?"

It is important to emphasise that these residents were acting to protect living environments they valued against the state; what libertarianism appears to do is to use such struggles for self-management and survival within capitalism to support a world view, an ideology which legitimates dismantling Labourist reforms, one of the most significant of which was the principle of housing provision as a democratic process managed by local councils and subsidised by central government. Modernisation did involve reforms, themselves consequences of developing the productive forces of social labour during the long boom - especially full employment - but, as shown in chapter 2, largely dependent on that boom and essentially top-down. It also undermined Labourist reforms by, for example, stimulating the transformation of state housing's form and location to meet the needs of capital, and removing many democratic aspects of housing provision. Post-modernism could accommodate struggles to preserve localities by treating them as local markets, giving the consumer "freedom of choice", but actually removing housing from a democratic process, however flawed. Gains have been possible within this strategy, such as the state resources won by the residents of Railway Street for their housing cooperative, but this hardly threatened the general direction of New Right housing policies. This

leads the present writer to disagree with Saunders (1986) when he argues, following Gorz (1982), that in an advanced industrial economy "liberation", while not generally possible in the formal work process, is possible in the sphere of consumption, where people can exercise "personal control and autonomy". There is little evidence from the present study to support the idea of "consumption" as an autonomous sphere. There is considerable evidence to support it as a sphere of reproduction, subject to different strategies and a locale of different struggles. Rather than certain "consumption sectors" offering autonomy, it is suggested that the ability of people to achieve outcomes they want depends on the articulation of reproduction in different periods - itself an outcome of class and popular struggles - and the enabling or disabling opportunities this presents.

What form did this take in the case studies examined in the present thesis? In all cases central government intervention was on the side of "self help", "self ownership" and privatisation, and against the displacement of these by the local state. This might be described as a "self help" housing policy - a solution which Harms (1982) argues emerges when there is a crisis in capitalism (crisis is seen here in the sense of a restructuring mechanism - see O'Connor, 1981). He concludes that measures to re Commodify housing and increase the amount of unpaid labour in society are ways out of the crisis on capital's terms, but are legitimated as "consumer choice" and "individual rights" (which they often are, but in response to economic and social changes which are beyond the individual's control). It is argued in the present thesis that it is erroneous to support such policy as progressive on the

grounds that it expands autonomy, as does, for example, Ward (1984b, p. 20):

"I suddenly became a housing pundit in the 70s. With John Turner I was on the round of tenants associations, housing managers and conferences. We talked to councillors about the notion of dweller control and to our horror and amazement I found that the councillors who agreed with me were Tories, and those who bitterly disagreed were Labour. It's as though the left wanted tenants to remain in a serf type situation. There they are, busy defending all sorts of aspects of the welfare state which don't get organised support from the working class - a curious and amusing paradox."

Harms' (1982, pp. 20-21) argument is that self-help housing shifts cost accounting in housing from societal costs to the individual and the family. Under specific political circumstances it may be a tool of popular struggle from below, but more often it is individualised self-help which reproduces the dominance of capitalism in the system as a whole. It may even not involve less public expenditure, but a restructuring of state expenditure (Robinson, 1986) - as appeared to be the case in Railway Street for example. Thus, grassroots struggles in County Durham and North Armagh were not only reactions to an articulation of reproduction but became accommodated within a rearticulation of reproduction in the early post-modern era.

Community action about housing in County Durham and North Armagh had its origins in working class experiences of the state in several "localities". The action was sporadic and involved relatively small numbers of people and specific issues rather than projects or programmes for social change. However, certain observations can be made about what happened. It is important to bear in mind that the struggles documented

took place early in the post-modern phase, and that people - as knowledgeable actors in Giddens' (1984, pp. 26-27) sense - were acting in ways that would preserve or improve their living environments in this wider context. In this sense, their actions were no different from the everyday actions of most people, but in these cases whole "localities" were under threat and this formed the basis for collective action. The threat was either modernisation in older areas, at local level, or the costs of the failure of modernisation for those having to live in modern environments (mass state housing). What modernisation failed to do was to take into account that:

"... for working people the dwelling should be understood as an activity centre required to meet an extremely diverse range of cultural needs." (Merrett with Gray, 1982, p. 58).

While the older environments of, for example, Framwellgate Moor or the Montaighs appeared largely to satisfy these needs, the environments of modernism - the mass state housing in the growth centres of Peterlee, Spennymoor or Craigavon - appeared not to for many people, and this was sufficient to generate community action. Harvey (1987) suggests that the use values of a locality are particularly critical for low income groups who cannot "escape". Merrett with Gray (1982, pp. 58-59) propose a number of factors which comprise the qualitative experience of housing consumption, including the physical character of the dwelling, control over it, the attributes of the neighbourhood, the dwelling's relative location, the ease of moving, and its financial attractiveness. These approaches help to suggest why struggles to defend the older private housing areas in the case studies were waged, despite the existence of

compensation and alternative "modern" housing. Of course, other factors are likely to have been involved, such as access to employment opportunities, but it is important to bear in mind that the occupants of the Category "D" villages and the Montaigns were being told that such opportunities would not be available, and that the growth centres would offer such opportunities. The mass state housing of modernisation often appeared to fail to score highly among "consumers" on any of Merrett and Gray's factors, especially with the residualisation of the areas at the end of the modernisation era. The form and location of much of this housing in County Durham and North Armagh was dominated by the needs of capital and a top-down type of reformism which saw modern housing as innately superior to older housing. This is not to suggest that the areas which were defended by community action would meet general needs: as Harvey (1973, p. 159) notes, "use value is not the same for all people in comparable dwellings". The key point is that in those particular localities the characteristics of residents broadly matched the characteristics of the housing environment, and that modernist housing policy did not recognise these aspects and the need to accommodate them. It is difficult not to agree with the residents that housing strategies were dogmatically imposed on the basis of spurious assumptions which served the interests of the bureaucracy and not of housing users.

## 9.2 Two nations?

Libertarian ideas of private property and the right to a return on it, anti-statism, pluralism and self-reliance have dominated post-modern

housing policy. It was inevitable that those who remained dependent on the state sector were marginal groups as the sphere of circulation expanded and many reproductive functions were relegated to a largely welfare function of managing the social proletariat. Whether this stratum is still a reserve army, or a stagnant reserve army as Byrne and Parson (1983) claim, is perhaps now debatable. Disorganising capitalism has given rise to a labour market in which the unemployed are often not a threat to the jobs of the employed. As Bauman (1987, p. 21) puts it:

"(T)he poor are less and less important to the reproduction of capital in their traditional role as the 'reserve army of labour'. They are no longer the object of concern for the twofold political task of recommodification of labour and limitation of working-class militancy. The previously taken-for-granted principle of social responsibility for the survival - and, indeed the well-being - of that part of society not directly engaged by capital as producers has suddenly come under attack ... (W)elfare payments becoming instruments of disenfranchisement and the withdrawal of citizenship rights for that rising minority of consumer society who cannot prove their citizenship in the only way a consumer market admits."

Chapter 1 used Jessop's (1982) concept of two nations strategy to conceptualise this, a more satisfactory formulation than Bauman's because of its emphasis on strategy in response to action, particularly working class struggle. It was argued that the two nations strategy of reasserting market processes and narrowing the sphere of direct state provision typified central state interventions in the early post-modern era, in the same way that a one nation strategy characterised the modernisation era of modest collectivism, corporatism and elite management. The housing dimension of this was interpreted as state intervention to favour market and self-help "solutions" in housing, while public sector tenants experienced state retrenchment. This

accorded with the description of Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley and Ling (1984, p. 52) that:

"Thatcherism has shifted its battle ground from opposition to the old consensus to construction of the new order. Increasingly Tory populism is taking the form of a unification of a privileged nation of 'good citizens' and 'hard workers' against a contained and subordinate nation ... In terms of the politics of support, the 'two nations' approach requires that the productive be rewarded through the market for their contribution to production (or at least to the provision of profitable marketed goods and services); conversely the parasitic must suffer for their failure to contribute adequately (if at all) to the market ... In this way Thatcherism hopes to recompose the conservative working class in a secular, instrumentalist, privatized direction ..."

These authors proceed to identify the limits to this strategy, such as the popular support which remains for aspects of the welfare state, but this is beyond the scope of the present thesis. What is relevant is the way the policies of the Thatcherite state, and their expression in local interventions, appear to have acted to construct a bloc of support (the first nation) while residualising those who have been unable to take advantage of the policies or were actually harmed by them (the second nation). The antagonism of sections of the working class to the economic and social impact of the Keynesian Welfare State provided a base of support, especially if won over by compromises and concessions (Jessop, Bonnett, Bromley and Ling, 1984, p. 58). Schematically, the case studies might be classified in terms of the "two nations" project as shown in figure 9.4. It will be seen from this that the "second nation" is associated with mass public sector housing and the "first nation" with private housing. This can only be regarded as a representation of tendencies, and in this specific case there are



qualifications - the Railway Street housing co-operative might not be classed as private housing, and many houses in Brownlow and, to a lesser extent, Peterlee were sold. However, in general the "second nation" in the post-modern period is those sections of the working class rendered peripheral by capitalist development/undevelopment, including state policy, and their concentration in depressed state housing areas in County Durham and North Armagh reflected this (see Friedman, 1977). The position of working class private housing areas, however, was not always clearly "first nation", especially in some of the more remote settlements where market conditions remained depressed in the early post-modern period.

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Figure 9.4 COMMUNITY ACTION IN COUNTY DURHAM AND NORTH ARMAGH: ITS LOCATION IN TWO NATIONS RESTRUCTURING

Type of state intervention (early post-modern era)		
First nation (benefit from emphasis on self- help and privatisation)	Second nation (dependent groups with few self-owned resources marginalised)	Struggle ends before post-modern phase becomes dominant
Some Category "D" villages	Bessemer Park	the Montaighs
Railway Street	Peterlee	Some Category "D" villages
Framwellgate Moor	Brownlow	

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Chapters 4 and 8 showed how people who were not empowered by wealth or political influence struggled against housing oppressions in civil

society. In the present thesis the focus has been on "community action", but there are also a whole series of often individual struggles in everyday life against such oppressions (see, for example, Parker, 1985; Reynolds, 1986). As was shown, the local state in depressed areas has become predominantly concerned with the management of these populations (although recent developments appear aimed at pluralising and thus diffusing and de-politicising the management of these groups - see the White Paper of September 1987, Housing: The Government's Proposals, Cm 214). Byrne's (1982, pp. 75-76) conclusion, although generalising to underline the point, seems appropriate:

"These groups can be considered to represent a contemporary form of the stagnant reserve army of labour and are a potentially destabilizing force in late capitalism. Ghettoized through housing policy, managed personally through social work, accultured through education, maintained by Supplementary Benefits, they are the objects of the local state and the local agencies of the national state. At the 1978 CSE conference Cockburn made an important verbal contribution when she pointed out the hostility of these groups to the state ... They are defined out of the political community and represented through corporatist mechanisms as problems. Thus for a significant section of the working class Anderson's 'ultimate self-determination' is far from being an article of political faith."

The struggles of the residents of the Category "D" villages, Railway Street, Framwellgate Moor, the Montaigns and Lurgan were struggles to win some control of housing. These residents generally had more resources and support to do this than the occupants of state housing, who were in a position of dependence on the local housing authority and often unemployed. Of significance were the structures of post-modernism in supporting self-help versus bureaucracy, and privatism versus statism, which defined them - to some degree - into the "first nation"

of a two nations strategy. In addition, these structures - such as housing associations - could be expanded to displace "statist" housing policies, as suggested by Cowan (1986, p. 22) in his interpretation of the Conservative Government's enthusiasm for housing co-operatives in Liverpool:

"When prime minister Thatcher visited Liverpool's co-ops, it was not because their co-operation inspired her, but because she saw a chance to drive a wedge between a municipal housing authority and the people who would normally have been its natural constituency."

However, although high income groups could be expected to be in a secure position within the "first nation", it is by no means certain that low income groups attracted by the prospect of first nation membership (benefits for privatised consumption and self-reliance) will experience an improvement in their circumstances. What is perhaps significant about the state funding obtained by the residents of Railway Street to improve their homes was that it followed from a struggle against a Labour local council, as in the case of the Liverpool co-ops. In other areas funding was not so readily available (365). As chapter 2 suggested, there is a politics of housing renewal - a prime example being the private sector improvement boom stimulated by the Conservative Government in the run-up to the 1983 General Election (Gibson, 1986, pp. 103-105). This contrasted with the massive inadequacy of central government allocations for the revitalisation and repair of state housing and the extension of the Right to Buy, itself transferring maintenance costs to individuals (Cantle, 1986). But the use of

privatisation and housing renewal policies to build political support is not unproblematic.

A number of researchers have emphasised the growing expense to the state of a system of housing finance which generously subsidises the comfortably-off while failing to protect low-income owner-occupiers or owner-occupiers in depressed local economies (see, for example, Ball, 1986; Karn, Doling and Stafford, 1986; Forrest and Williams, 1984). Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray (1985, pp. 62-118) argue that the UK's structures of housing provision are not only associated with major inequities, but are also inefficient and inflationary. In addition, post-modernist housing policy is, according to some commentators, a recipe for growing decay in the housing stock. It has been argued in this thesis that struggles to defend older down-market private housing against modernisation were motivated by perceptions of the use value of the housing, with residents satisfied that this was reflected in its exchange value if the market was allowed to operate. Bower (1981), however, argues that if lower-income private housing is left to occupants' views about its habitability and to market processes, the result is likely to be underlying decay as many occupants invest only in "cosmetic" maintenance and neglect more fundamental work. Underlying decay, in this situation, can be neglected until it reaches a point where the dwelling is uninhabitable and rapidly loses its market value. Where a residential area is desirable and in high demand, but contains much poor quality housing (such as parts of Old Framwellgate Moor), low income households are likely to be outbid by better-off households who will realise its market potential by safeguarding and improving it

("gentrification"). But in declining low demand areas (such as many ex-Category "D" villages or Lurgan) low-income households will often accept less habitable accommodation because it is cheap, but will not have the money to tackle underlying decay. Bower (1981, p. 23) concludes that:

"The end effect that we have seen of commodification is that decaying housing is shuffled around until it is finally those who can do nothing about it that are left with the burden. They become dependent on the charity of the state, in this case in the form of local government, to declare slum clearance areas and offer everyone rehousing or to offer special incentives to owners in particular areas to improve their houses."

While this problem of how to prop up the market at the lower end was a rationale for state renovation grants to private owners and redevelopment, Bower argues that the new grant provisions of the 1980 Housing Act reduced the emphasis of renewal policy on underlying decay and concentrated it instead on high market value repairs and improvements which would "oil the wheels" in the sphere of circulation. Thus the reality, as opposed to the rhetoric, of post-modernism may be very costly to some home owners. It is not possible to say whether this has, in fact, happened in any of the case study areas because the research was carried out too early in the post-modern era to be able to judge. Railway Street won full improvement funds from the Housing Corporation and appeared to be safe; Framwellgate Moor, initially blighted by the council's suspension of renovation grants partly for reasons with which Bower would probably agree, appeared to be a safe investment in a vibrant local housing market after the council was forced to abandon its policy for the area; housing in many of the Category "D" villages and the townlands of the Montaigns is more likely

to become a liability for owners trapped in depressed markets with ageing properties. At the same time, of course, there have been predictions that the predicament of the occupants of mass state housing would deteriorate due to the main source of funding for maintenance and improvements, capital receipts, declining as maintenance liabilities grow (Cantle, 1986). It would be interesting to return to the state housing in the case study areas in the late 1980s to investigate how conditions had been affected.

### 9.3 Final conclusions

In focusing on the research problem discussed in chapter 1, and in adopting the type of methods discussed in Appendix 1, inevitably processes and experiences in the case study areas have not been studied as comprehensively as would have been desirable. As explained in chapter 1, a broad conception of working class has been employed - one which in non-marxist studies would be described as "the public", "the people" or "citizens". Although a detailed class analysis would have been enlightening, this was not the central concern of the thesis and doing justice to this aspect would have consumed resources and time that were considered more appropriately devoted to investigating other aspects of the research issue and problem. The thesis had as its problem the contest of domains between state and civil society expressed in community action. A broad conception of working class was, it is argued, appropriate to this task, although detail on some interesting dimensions is lost. An example is the spatial coalitions which appeared to form in the Category "D" villages between the petty bourgeoisie,

small capital and a fairly diverse working class to oppose local councils comprised largely of one fraction of the working class - older manual workers. This is clearly an area where further research would have been of considerable interest.

Another weakness is the "invisibility" of women in many parts of the present thesis, and the lack of gender analysis. It would have been possible to develop a feminist critique of modernisation - its assumptions about the nuclear family and the unwaged reproductive labour of women for instance. This would have added a further dimension to analysis. In addition, to what extent could the intransigence of the conservative male-dominated Labour council of Derwentside in regard to the proposals of the Railway Street Residents' Association be explained by the councillors' hostility to a communal dwelling in the Street as part of the housing co-op? (366). Similarly, although it was suggested in chapter 8 that the conservative male-dominated Craigavon Borough Council's negative attitude to the Craigavon Independent Advice Centre was sectarian-based, to what extent was it also sexist? The advice centre was mainly run by and strongly orientated towards the problems encountered largely by women, such as childcare, feeding and clothing the family, access to shops, desertion and male violence. The marxist orientation of the present thesis makes it weak in analysing gender relations, which were not a central issue. In general actors in the community action studied appeared to take gender relations as given; it was the disruption of everyday life which appeared to encompass, on the whole, traditional gender roles that mobilised community action. However, it is very likely that a significant reason why state

intervention during modernisation was so insensitive to existing civil society was because it was a male-dominated process (see, for example, Mark-Lawson, Savage and Warde, 1985; MacKenzie and Rose, 1983).

Finally, especially in state housing, many and sometimes the majority of actors in community action were women. In Peterlee, for example, situations of female tenants confronting male councillors were common.

It has been argued that community action about housing in County Durham and North Armagh can be explained in terms of the working class experience of modernisation and of depressed modern environments in the early post-modern era. Despite the reformist aspects of modernisation - such as the decline in unfitness and improved access to some housing amenities brought about by mass state housing - its economic and social impact on some sections of the working class was often costly.

Modernisation, though, was itself a response to wider system forces in the capitalist process, which exerted determining pressure upon the development and form of housing and planning policies. People reacted to this process and to its expression in policies that sought to replace environments of small houses, convenient facilities and community life by uniform mass state housing easily distinguishable from private sector housing. But, as one of the chairpersons of Old Framwellgate Moor Residents Association argued so persistently, it was not possible towards the end of the modernisation era in the case of many "near slums" to use health grounds to justify redevelopment. Redevelopment appeared, in fact, as part of a modernisation ideology. Many residents in the villages and older urban centres of County Durham and North Armagh denied that modern state housing was better than old private



housing. But although struggles ensued between residents and the local state, they were generally weak and sporadic. The corporatist nature of the local state explains to a large degree why this was so: local people could not penetrate decision-making centres. However, the structures of early post-modernism provided some groups of residents with the resources they needed to win their case - most clearly demonstrated in Railway Street.

There are three levels at which the situation might begin to be put right. The most "structural" is suggested by chapter 2, where the fundamental problem of uneven development was identified. Economic planning which controls and allocates capital, land and labour on the basis of equality criteria and use value, rather than profit and exchange value determining the uses to which these resources are put, would be a - revolutionary - solution. Secondly, given the post-modern development of increasing differentiation and fragmentation within the working class in both work and consumption, structures within civil society which contribute to rebuilding the communities contemporary capitalism has broken up, so as to reconstruct grassroots frameworks for collective action and politics, could be put in place through radical practice in local government and the voluntary sector (Williams, 1983, pp. 177-199; Pope, 1985; Blackman, 1986). Thirdly, radical practice could be aimed at restructuring the relationship between the state and civil society which is at the core of many of the issues discussed in the present thesis. Others have come to this third strategic conclusion through different routes, and its relevance to the whole area of

socialist practice cannot be underestimated, as Panitch (1986a, p. 92)

warns:

"For socialists, the fact that a right-wing market populism representing the most blatantly reactionary elements of capitalist ideology rushed in to fill the vacuum left by the failures of social democracy and Keynesianism became, and must remain, a very great cause for concern ... (W)e must also learn from what the popular appeal of the radical right tells us. The strength of the monetarist assault should not have become the occasion for a knee-jerk defence of the Keynesian/welfare state with all its ambiguous and constricted reforms, but rather treated as the occasion for proposing - for insisting on - the fundamental restructuring of the state and its relationship to society so that the communities it is supposed to serve and the people who labour for it together have great involvement in the public domain. Rather than leave the issue at 'less state' versus 'more state', socialists must recognise that popular antipathy to the state can also be addressed in terms of speaking of a different kind of state."

It is suggested that the research in the present thesis does support what are believed to be very important conclusions about the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society in advanced capitalism, as illustrated by the history of modernisation and its demise in County Durham and North Armagh. Under capitalism, the state has to treat the working class as a commodity, to make its labour power available and attractive to capital and to control those denied paid work. Under mass democracy, compromises and concessions also have to be made. It is to constrain the former and expand the latter that a new type of state should be struggled for to avoid the costs that have been documented in this study, and in many others, so that the struggle against the treatment of human beings as commodities can be waged at a higher level than tactics of exclusionary closure or the private search for an elusive autonomy within existing structures.

## APPENDIX 1

### GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Chapter 1 introduced the research problem of the present thesis, described the research strategy adopted and discussed the main concepts it was proposed to use to organise and explain the empirical material. This appendix considers in more detail the techniques employed and the justification for them.

#### 1. Techniques of data collection

Two main tasks were involved in undertaking this thesis, both entailing essentially historical investigations. First, it attempts to answer why community action happened in the cases studied. Second, it attempts to show what this community action was like. The thesis aims to place particular local events within a conceptualisation of wider processes to reveal cumulative causations and significant patternings through a comparative study. It is, in essence, an exercise in "historical sociology" (Abrams, 1980, p. 302).

The research is based on a diverse range of data. A literature review continued throughout the research period, and secondary sources form the major part of the information used for chapters 1 and 2.

Various techniques were used to find out what happened/was happening in the case study areas of County Durham and North Armagh. These had been

selected as sub-regions which had undergone "modernisation" in housing and planning. The first methodological problem at the beginning of the research was to locate where community action was occurring and where it had occurred in the recent past (the late 1970s/early 1980s). Key informants were identified and interviewed to compile overviews of community action in the two sub-regions and to start a process of networking by which other informants could be located. In County Durham the organisation Community Service for County Durham kept records going back several years of community action about housing and planning issues in the county. The organisation equates with both a Rural Community Council and a Council for Voluntary Service. Two current employees and one ex-employee were interviewed at length at the beginning of the research, and this generated a large number of contacts in the local community which were subsequently followed up.

A second organisation played a key role at this stage, the voluntary agency Folkus which had files on community action in the county and members who had been involved in some of this action. The local group of Shelter operated from its offices and were well-informed of local housing struggles. The researcher had been employed full-time as a Volunteer Organiser with Folkus for a year before leaving to pursue the present study and was well-placed to gather information at the grassroots of community action in the county.

In North Armagh the researcher also benefitted from previous employment experience which, although with the Belfast-based Voluntary Service Belfast (VSB), brought him into contact with members and ex-members of

community groups in Craigavon. David Byrne's contacts in Craigavon Independent Advice Centre proved invaluable, and this organisation made its facilities available to the researcher. Workers in the centre were able to provide a large number of contacts in the local community, as did community workers employed by Craigavon Borough Council and the Southern Health and Social Services Board who were associated with the centre.

By January 1981 the researcher was satisfied that all cases of contemporary and recent community action on a scale sufficient to attract local newspaper coverage and/or involve umbrella/resource organisations in County Durham and North Armagh had been identified, and this was confirmed during the course of fieldwork. Several more minor cases were not researched in detail or included in the present thesis because of their similarity to cases which more clearly illustrated the issues and processes involved, examples being a struggle in New Kyo (County Durham) to save old terraces from redevelopment and the activities of some small tenants' associations (these could, of course, have been included if resources had been adequate). All groups that had recently been or were active and prominent in areas encompassed by modernisation strategies were included. This boiled down in County Durham to Railway Street Residents' Association, Old Framwellgate Moor Residents' Association and several tenants' groups in Peterlee; and in North Armagh to several tenants' associations in Craigavon. The important contextual investigations of the struggles against Category "D" and the depopulation of the Montaigns (chapters 3 and 7) were

basically recent historical surveys as community action about these issues had largely ceased by the 1980s.

It is possible that other less prominent cases were not identified, but the prominent cases - in terms of their media profiles and the links made with other organisations - were included in the fieldwork and historical investigation. It is recognised that struggles about modernisation and other issues would have occurred at a variety of other levels, and that community action of the type selected was just one of a wide range of possible types of struggle (see, for example, Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, pp. 200-201). The thesis is not suggesting that community action encompasses all struggles in civil society, that all community action can be explained in terms of struggles against modernisation or that modernisation always provoked community action. It is arguing that modernisation met with community action in both County Durham and North Armagh, that common issues were involved, that the causes and implications of these processes and conflicts were broadly the same, and that these issues and implications have wider relevance because of what they reveal about relations between state and civil society. By analytically structuring empirical material on community action the thesis has attempted to show how the history of "modernisation" and its demise "happened", and how working class people in localities were part of this history, and took part in local events which were connected to much wider forces of change determined by the operation of a capitalist economic system and the exercise of state power within these system forces.

The research involved three main techniques considered, in combination, most relevant to the research problem:

1. Inspection of written sources and documents. The main sources were local newspapers, a large number of bulletins, reports and internal documents produced by community groups and statutory agencies, correspondence, council minutes and documentation, and official statistics. These sources were used both to assist in constructing accounts of community action and for the profiles of the local areas with which each case study opens. Local newspapers were examined on a regular basis in both County Durham and North Armagh - principally the Lurgan Mail, the Portadown Herald, the Portadown News, Craigavon Progress, the Belfast Telegraph, the Durham Advertiser, the Newsletter, the Irish News, Durham City News, Durham Street Press, The Journal, the Northern Echo and the Evening Despatch. Use was made of four archives: the Northern Echo library in Darlington, the collections of Folkus, the Belfast City Library newspaper collection and the cuttings kept by Craigavon Independent Advice Centre. Although it was relatively easy to inspect local newspapers in Durham, where the researcher was based, it was more difficult to keep abreast of coverage in North Armagh. The cuttings kept by Craigavon Independent Advice Centre were a great help in this respect. In Durham the researcher also enjoyed similar cooperation from the community group Folkus.

Council minutes were inspected in the relevant public libraries - namely Durham City, Consett and Easington. Documents such as Housing Investment Programmes and Housing Strategies were obtained on request

directly from council offices. Council business was less relevant in Craigavon, and whilst Housing Executive Board minutes are not made public, a variety of useful documents was obtained on request from the Housing Centre in Belfast and the Regional Headquarters in Craigavon.

Although few of the community groups kept formal minutes of their meetings, it was usual for them to keep files of correspondence and other material, to which the researcher was able to obtain access. Most groups produced newsletters of some description used to keep local residents informed of developments. Members also sometimes wrote accounts of their work at various stages for community newspapers, and the Newsletter produced by the Durham Shelter Group was particularly useful in this respect.

Most of the written material examined was primary sources, having a direct relationship with the people, situations and events studied. However, although these provided first-hand accounts, they are not meant to be treated as "objective" accounts but to be located within historical context (see Burgess, 1984, pp. 123-124). Since the research was largely concerned with what actors experienced and did, and with their views of social processes and changes, these data were treated as valid evidence. They were used in combination with public documents such as newspaper reports and council minutes. These too, of course, are versions of social reality.

2. Participant observation in local situations. Participant observation enabled the researcher to study the contemporary expression



of historical processes and was undertaken with this in mind. The bulk of the fieldwork was carried out between October 1980 and October 1982. Several trips of between one and two months' duration, totalling eight months, were made to Craigavon, and the remainder of the time was spent based in Durham City. Research access was often achieved through the networking process referred to above. The purpose of participant observation was to discern the general pattern of issues which determined the events under investigation (see Butcher, Collis, Glen and Sills, 1980, pp. 18-21). It took the form of attendance at committee meetings, public meetings, accompanying local community workers in their day-to-day activities and making pre-arranged visits to community groups. The researcher's role was made clear as one of a student documenting community action from a grassroots perspective and the researcher was accepted in this role. His previous experience as a community worker facilitated communication and interaction. There was no attempt to play a passive role; in fact the researcher often assisted with local activities and engaged in long informal conversations with participants.

In Durham the researcher's identification with Folkus and in Craigavon with the Independent Advice Centre inevitably shaped attitudes to the research when known. In some cases this was helpful in soliciting cooperation, in others it made informants wary. The result has probably been a greater influence of radical perspectives than of conservative perspectives on the issues and events documented.

The focus of the research was on what people experienced and did in civil society, and as noted above there were no major problems in gaining access at this level to observe events. Therefore, the problem of carrying out participant observation within the state or other significant institutions was not considered to be a major methodological obstacle. In any case, as Jenkins (1983, p. 23) points out, participant observation is of very limited efficacy in such contexts because of the few decisions that are made in public to allow an adequate account of what is going on to be constructed by observation alone. A feature of recent capitalism has been the increasingly hidden role of its elites and for this and other reasons connected with the nature of the capitalist world system, the character of capitalist development discussed in the present thesis has been treated as a social process at an abstract level which has specific concrete outcomes in particular local situations (see Massey and Meegan, 1985). Furthermore, it is very unlikely that the trust that was established with the community groups would have been so forthcoming if the researcher was easily accepted into state or other powerful institutions to carry out participant observation (see Burton, 1978, pp. 164-179).

3. The most important source of data was interviews with key informants. These usually took the form of a dialogue about the history of a particular local issue and associated events. In total 68 interviews were conducted, but this excludes a large number of informal discussions mostly with community action participants and community workers. Some of these were taped and some were recorded in note form.

Informants were selected on the basis of quite extensive knowledge collected from other sources. A list of interviews follows:

Interviews in County Durham

1. Ex-Countryside Officer, Community Service for Durham County  
(27.10.80).
2. Countryside Officer, Community Service for Durham County  
(30.10.80).
3. Rural Development Officer, Community Service for Durham County.  
(3.10.80).
4. Retired Chief Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District  
Council (3.4.81).
5. Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District  
Council (7.10.81).
6. Housing Officer, Easington District Council (4.8.82)
7. Planning Officer, Easington District Council (5.8.82).
8. Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer, Derwentside District  
Council (8.7.81).
9. Grants Officer, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council  
(9.12.80).
10. Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District Council  
(7.10.81).
11. Community worker, Newton Aycliffe Development Corporation  
(27.11.80).
12. Community workers, Washington Social Development Department  
(8.12.80).

13. Neighbourhood Worker, Bessemer Park (6.8.82).
14. Ex-social worker, Bessemer Park (28.7.81).
15. Secretary, Wear Valley Trades Council (1.12.80).
16. Secretary, Durham County Housing Association (27.1.81).
17. Leader of Labour Group, Wear Valley District Council (29.1.81).
18. Secretary, District Labour Party, Durham City (9.8.83).
19. Chairperson of Old Framwellgate Moor Residents' Association  
(6.11.80 and 28.1.82).
20. Secretary of Old Framwellgate Moor Residents' Association  
(5.3.82).
21. Railway Street Association leading member (22.7.83).
22. Railway Street Association, Secretary (27.1.81).
23. Leading tenant activist, Peterlee (4.8.82).
24. Leading tenant activist, Peterlee (30.4.81 and 1.6.81).
25. Group interview with members of Old Framwellgate Moor Residents  
Association (10.3.82).
26. Group interview with members of New Kyo Residents' Association  
(11.11.80).
27. Chair of Witton Park Action Committee (30.4.81).
28. Group interview with members of Witton Park Action Committee  
(27.1.81).
29. Group interview with members of Consett Retired Men's Forum  
(5.2.81).
30. Lecturer in Social Policy, Durham University (9.12.80).
31. Housing officer, Durham City Council (8.10.87)

Interviews in Northern Ireland

1. Senior Social Services Officer, Craigavon Area Hospital, Social Services Department (19.11.80 and 18.5.81).
2. Social Services Officer, Craigavon Area Hospital, Social Services Department (1.6.81, 7.4.82).
3. Advice worker, Craigavon Independent Advice Centre (1.6.81 and 2.6.81).
4. Treasurer, Craigavon Community Worker Project (18.5.81).
5. Community worker, Craigavon Borough Council (3.6.81, 29.9.81, 1.10.81 and 7.4.82).
6. Local planning consultant, Craigavon (6.6.81)
7. Principal Housing Officer, Brownlow District Housing Executive Office (20.5.81 and 1.10.81).
8. District Manager, Brownlow District Housing Executive Office (7.4.82).
9. Regional Director, Housing Executive Southern Region (30.9.81 and 8.4.82).
10. District Manager, Lurgan District Housing Executive Office (30.9.81).
11. Planning Officer, Department of the Environment, Belfast (28.5.81).
12. Planning Officer, Department of the Environment, Belfast (4.6.81).
13. Senior Social Worker, Newry Area Hospital, Social Services Department, ex-member of the Montaighs Housing Action Group (21.5.81).

14. Information Officer, Craigavon Development Office (19.11.80).
15. Information Officer, Northern Ireland Council of Social Service (2.6.81).
16. Development Officer, Shelter (Northern Ireland) (2.6.81).
17. Ex-CONI (Community Organisations Northern Ireland) worker (4.6.81).
18. Chairperson, Private Housebuilders Association of Northern Ireland (4.6.81).
19. Chairperson, Craigavon Trades Council (19.11.80).
20. Secretary, Brownlow Community Council (19.11.80).
21. Workers' Party councillor, Craigavon Borough Council (20.11.81).
22. Chairperson, St Peter's Community Association, Lurgan (20.5.81 and 21.5.81).
23. Ex-member of St Peter's Community Association (3.6.81).
24. Chairperson, Meadowbrook Tenants' Association, Brownlow (21.5.81).
25. Founding members of Ridgeway Action Committee (4.6.81 and 30.9.81).
26. Founding member of the Montaighs Housing Action Group (30.9.81).

Often an interview, a period of participant observation or a documentary source would suggest potential informants. In contrast to participant observation, where the level of investigation was in one "social world" - that of community action - the interview technique was used to generate data from actors in many different positions in the social processes being studied, including community groups, local councils, the Housing Executive and other statutory bodies. Informants were made aware of the nature of the research and again the data were taken largely at face-value as the informant's perspective on, experience of, and/or analysis of an event or issue. In general, informants were

remarkably frank and cooperative. The interviews were always quite general in nature, eliciting detail where relevant, but covered a pre-determined list of topics (semi-structured). With regard to community groups, interviews were either with key activists or with a group of members. A typical set of guidelines in such cases were as follows:

1. What have been/are the group's main concerns, what have/been are its main activities?
2. Who have been/are its most active members?
3. Has the group kept records of its work and experiences? (Inspect if possible).
4. The context - what was the situation before the group was formed? How much awareness was there of the problems or issues subsequently taken up by the group?
5. What is the group's constituency, or whose interests does the group want to represent? Is there support from any local councillors?
6. What is seen as positive about the locality, which should be retained or improved, and what is seen as negative, which should be ameliorated or removed, comparing it with other areas?
7. What are seen as the roles of the group, local government and administration, and the private sector in improving the locality?
8. Were there any particular events which triggered the formation of the group?
9. What was the nature of any support obtained from other individuals/organisations? What contacts were made with areas known to have similar problems?

10. What is the nature of the group's relationships with local government and administration? With whom has it dealt? What particular policies or practices cause problems?
11. What coverage in the local media has the group had? (Details).
12. What organisational and developmental problems have there been? Have any active members moved away from the area or fallen out with the group - why?
13. What has been/is the group's strategy to achieve its objectives?
14. What have been its achievements and failures to date? What problems are anticipated in future? Has it all been worth it?

As can be seen, the emphasis was on the history of the group and its experiences and relationships, rather than its internal composition and structure. Interviews were often quite long - two hours was not unusual. If the interview was tape recorded key passages were transcribed very soon after the interview. If only notes were taken, the author wrote up the notes in detail immediately after the interview.

One of the problems with the interview technique as a means of finding out what happened in the past is the distortion of the past by informants, due to selective recall for example. However it is argued that what is important for the present study is recall as a "social document": it illustrates the way the informant sees things, often reflects his/her current preoccupations and frequently forms the basis of revealing dialogues (Williamson, 1982b). Such oral history, while fruitful in itself and still neglected in urban sociology, is best used with other evidence to construct accounts of "how it was".



A number of conferences and workshops were attended during the fieldwork period. Some examples are as follows:

1. National Housing Liaison Committee Conference: "How Do We Fight the Housing Crisis?" (31.1.81).
2. Durham Shelter Group Public Meeting: "Housing Issues in the 1980s" (7.3.81).
3. Shelter Regional Conference on Housing, Durham City: "The Challenge of the 80s" (10-12.4.81).
4. Shelter (Northern Ireland) First Conference (6.6.81).
5. National Union of Public Employees, UCATT and North East Tenants' Organisation: Joint Union and Tenant Weekend School (15.9.81).
6. Political Economy of Housing Workshop, Sheffield (25.9.82).
7. Community Workers Forum: "A Seminar on Environmental Schemes, Craigavon" (23.9.83).

## 2. The research design

Chapter 1 considered the research issue, problem, strategy and key concepts, but it is appropriate at this point to make some observations under the general heading of research design.

The thesis has been organised around an attempt to explain community action in County Durham and North Armagh in terms of a response to modernisation and to show how the transition to post-modernism shaped the outcome of these struggles. The combination of techniques of data collection considered above was used to construct historical accounts of

particular social processes in which community action and modernisation interacted, from which certain conclusions were drawn about the nature of state-civil society relations. In particular, data were gathered on:

1. The nature of modernisation in County Durham and North Armagh and the transition to post-modernism, with particular reference to housing and planning.
2. With reference to community action in areas encompassed by modernisation strategies, the main problems at stake, the processes by which they were produced and the policies attempted to manage them, attempting to relate these to (1).
3. The relationships between community action and the state.
4. Other interesting aspects of the community struggles selected as case studies as they arose.

Two points need to be made about the research design which determined why these data were collected. Firstly, the extensive nature of the research strategy and the fact that the work was carried out by a single researcher with limited resources meant that it was not possible to collect and analyse information in the kind of depth that would have been possible in an intensive study. For this reason substantial use was made of relatively few key informants and participant observation was limited by both practical and strategic considerations. Interviews were planned to generate information from key actors in the processes under investigation.

Oral history and participant observation both suffer from what Abrams' (1982, pp. 316-318) calls "the hallucination of the direct encounter". It is not possible to recover the past "in all its empirical actuality", and anyway, even if it were possible, or nearly possible, such a mass of data would be likely to be "overkill" in terms of constructing explanations. Problems of "how it was" not being the same as "how it was said to be" apply to participant observation just as much as to interviews or documentary evidence. Making sense of the past involves a conscious effort to theorise it and an approach based on the mutual interdependence of analysis and description. This is a complex task, which as Abrams (pp. 334-335) hints at, might be usefully informed by realist method.

This introduces the second point. In analysing the material collected during the course of the research, attention was paid to how analysis might be informed heuristically by the approach of realist method. This meant considering the possible generative mechanisms behind the rise and fall of modernisation and the way these shaped state intervention in civil society, as well as paying attention to the detail of contingent factors. A comparative approach was used to assist in identifying the generative mechanisms (see Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin and Gray, 1985, pp. 23-31). This was largely done by examining working class experiences in the case study localities, looking for common concepts and modes of social action, and relating these to what was known mainly from secondary sources about wider economic and policy processes. However, as Saunders (1986, pp. 352-362) points out, this is often to a large extent a conjectural exercise because of the difficulty of testing

empirically theories which are at a fairly abstract level, even if they appear capable of extension to the concrete. The present thesis has attempted to approach this problem by presenting an account which makes clear what is being debated, makes clear what is being claimed, and makes clear how information has been assembled to support these claims. As Sayer (1985, p. 229) writes, although social science aims "to construct a coherent description and explanation of the world and hence to represent and perhaps 'mirror' an object external to itself", it cannot by its nature mimic the practices of natural sciences, but progresses through the overlapping of abstract, concrete and critical elements.

"The identification of theory and practice is a critical act, through which practice is demonstrated rational and necessary, and theory realistic and rational." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 365).

## APPENDIX 2

### FOOTNOTES

1. This is used in Abrams' (1982, p. xv) sense as follows: "A problematic is a rudimentary organisation of a field of phenomena which yields problems for investigation. The organisation occurs on the basis of some more or less explicitly theoretical assumptions - it is an application of assumptions and principles to phenomena in order to constitute a range of enquiry."
2. Census for Ireland, 1911 and Census of England and Wales, 1911.
3. Labour History Group discussion, Newcastle Upon Tyne Polytechnic, 25 February 1982.
4. See note 3.
5. A story chronicled in Amber Films' T Dan Smith: a funny thing happened on the way to Utopia, 1987.
6. Durham County Council, Written Analysis: County Development Plan Amendment 1971, p. 1.
7. Talk by Mike Murphy, Labour History Group, Newcastle Upon Tyne Polytechnic, 25 February 1982.
8. Northern Ireland Housing Executive News Release, 8 March 1984.
9. Durham County Council, Housing: Durham County Structure Plan Technical Paper No 3 (undated).
10. Financial Times, 13 September 1985.
11. Durham County Structure Plan and Darlington Urban Structure Plan - Report of the Panel Chaired by P Otton QC, 1980.
12. Department of the Environment (Northern Regional Office), Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended) Durham County Structure Plan, Darlington Urban Structure Plan - Statement relating to the Secretary of State's proposed modifications (undated).
13. Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning Press Release, 19 December 1975.
14. Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, Residential Development in Rural Areas, Development Control Policy Note, November 1976.
15. Central Statistical Office, Regional Trends, annual.

16. Durham County Council annual leaflets, County Durham in Figures.
17. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Annual Reports.
18. See note 16.
19. See note 15.
20. See note 17.
21. See note 15.
22. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (1985) Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 1984; Department of the Environment (1982) English House Condition Survey 1981, Part I - Report of the Physical Condition Survey; Central Statistical Office Regional Trends, annual.
23. Political Economy of Housing Workshop, Sheffield, 25 September 1982.
24. North of England County Councils Association (1982), The State of the Region Report 1982; The Government's Expenditure Plans 81/2 - 83/4 Cmnd 8175; Expenditure per capita figures based on Census of Population 1971 and 1981.
25. Northern Ireland Housing Executive Chairperson on PM Ulster, BBC Radio Ulster, 29 September 1983.
26. Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Corporate Strategy Review 1983, Section 4.2, paras 22, 25.
27. See note 15.
28. See note 15.
29. Letter to The Guardian, 14 November 1977.
30. Interview with Ron Snowden, Retired Chief Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District Council, 3 April 1981.
31. Interview with Ken Payne, Ex-Countryside Officer, Community Service for Durham County, 27 October 1980.
32. Interview with Jane Keithley, Lecturer in Social Policy, Durham University, 9 December 1980.
33. Interview with J Richardson, Leader of the Labour Group, Wear Valley District Council, 29 January 1981.
34. Interview with John Callaghan, Secretary, Durham County Housing Association, 27 January 1981.
35. See note 33.

36. Northern Echo, 23 January 1979.
37. Evening Despatch, 7 March 1979; Northern Echo, 15 March 1980.
38. Northern Echo, 30 July 1980.
39. Northern Echo, 23 July 1979; 24 July 1979.
40. Northern Echo, 12 October 1979.
41. Northern Echo, 11 October 1979; 15 October 1979; 16 October 1979.
42. Northern Echo, 12 October 1979.
43. See note 34.
44. See note 33.
45. See note 30.
46. See note 33.
47. Interview with Keith Belton, Chairperson, Witton Park Action Committee, 30 April 1981.
48. See note 33.
49. See note 33.
50. Durham County Structure Plan and Darlington Urban Structure Plan - Report of the Panel Chaired by P Otton QC, 1980, p. 5.
51. Durham Advertiser, 2 January 1981.
52. Durham Street Press, December/January 1980/81.
53. See note 33.
54. See note 30.
55. Interview with Ron Best, Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District Council, 7 October 1981.
56. See note 55.
57. Durham Advertiser, 2 January 1981.
58. Heighington Action Group, Heighington Parish Study (undated).
59. See note 31.
60. See note 11.

61. See note 12.
62. Northern Echo, 12 November 1979.
63. Interview with Liz Revelley, Community Development Officer, Newton Aycliffe Development Corporation, 27 November 1980.
64. See note 63.
65. See note 63.
66. Interview with M Charlton and colleague, Community Development Officers, Washington Development Corporation.
67. See notes 63 and 66.
68. See note 66.
69. Report of Chief Executive Officer to Special Housing Committee - Bessemer Park, Sedgefield District Council, 20 April 1982.
70. Bessemer Park: Report of Community Development Officer Assistant, 17 November 1977.
71. See note 70.
72. See note 70, p. 2.
73. See note 70, p. 1.
74. See note 70, p. 6.
75. See note 70, p. 7.
76. Interview with Graham Cooper, ex-social worker, Durham County Council, 28 July 1981.
77. Interview with local neighbourhood worker, 6 August 1982.
78. See note 69.
79. Officers' Working Party Report on Bessemer Park Housing. Spennymoor: Analysis of Defects; Proposed Improvements, 1978.
80. The Guardian, 22 April 1982.
81. See note 69.
82. See note 69, p. 24.
83. The Guardian 22 April 1982.
84. See note 77.



85. C Dodd in The Guardian, 30 May 1981.
86. See note 85.
87. N. Nicholson, "Housing in Peterlee - how a dream became a nightmare", Durham County Housing Campaign Newsletter, No 1, May 1981.
88. Census 1971, Economic Activity Report Great Britain Part 1; Census 1971, New Town Report - Economic Activity, Workplace and Transport to Work Tables (10 per cent sample); Census 1981, New Towns Report England & Wales Part 2; Census 1981, Economic Activity Table Great Britain.
89. Durham Street Press, September/October 1982.
90. See note 89. p. 6.
91. See note 89, p. 7.
92. Census 1971 - Durham County Report Part 1; Census 1981 - New Towns Report England & Wales Part 1; Census 1981 - New Towns Report England & Wales Part 1; Central Statistical Office, Regional Trends, 1983.
93. Easington District Council, Easington District Plan, unpublished draft, April 1982.
94. Interview with Environmental Health Officer, Easington District Council, 4 August 1982.
95. See note 93.
96. Durham Street Press, December/January 1981/82.
97. Interview with Simon Carr, a founder member, 4 August 1982.
98. See note 96.
99. See note 97.
100. Easington District Council, Minutes: Housing Services Committee, 23 February 1981.
101. Northern Echo, 5 April 1981.
102. See note 97.
103. See note 97.
104. See note 97.
105. Easington District Council, Minutes, Housing Services Committee, 14 July 1980.

106. Easington District Council, Housing Strategy Statement 1982.
107. Easington District Council, Minutes, Housing Services Committee, 21 April 1981.
108. The author attended this meeting.
109. Interview with Housing Officer, Easington District Council, 5 August 1982.
110. See note 97.
111. Easington District Council, Minutes, Housing Services Committee, 13 July 1981.
112. Quoted in Durham Street Press April/May 1981.
113. See note 112.
114. See note 93.
115. See note 106.
116. Easington District Council, Housing Strategy Statement 1981, p. 1.
117. See note 94.
118. Durham Street Press April/May 1981.
119. See note 109.
120. See note 109.
121. See note 106.
122. See note 93.
123. See note 116.
124. See note 116.
125. See note 106.
126. See note 106, p. 4.
127. See note 93.
128. These included Days of Hope, The Stars Look Down and Ripping Yarns.
129. Principally a group in New Kyo, where Derwentside Council withdrew renovation grants in 1975, leading to a long campaign by residents who looked to the Railway Street Public Inquiry to force the the council to change its policy on "substandard" private housing.

130. See note 9.
131. Department of the Environment, Local Housing Statistics: England and Wales, quarterly.
132. See notes 9, 16 and 131.
133. See note 9.
134. See note 131; population figures from 1971 and 1981 Census.
135. Derwentside District Council, Housing Strategy and Investment Programme 1979-84, 1979.
136. See note 9.
137. See note 135.
138. Department of the Environment, Circular 13/81: Compulsory Purchase Orders made under Housing Powers.
139. See note 135.
140. Durham Advertiser, 28 March 1980.
141. See note 16.
142. Durham Advertiser, 28 March 1980.
143. Northern Echo, 5 February 1982.
144. Interview with Ken Tait, RSA member, 27 January 1981.
145. Interview with the Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer, Derwentside District Council, 8 July 1981.
146. See note 145.
147. See note 131.
148. See note 145.
149. See note 135.
150. Department of the Environment (Newcastle Upon Tyne), Housing Act 1957 Part III Derwentside District Council Application for Confirmation of the Derwentside District (Railway Street, Langley Park) Compulsory Purchase Order 1980: Inspector's Report.
151. Durham Shelter Group, Newsletter, May 1981.
152. Interview with Eileen Meek, RSA member, 22 July 1983.
153. Durham Advertiser, 13 February 1981.

154. Durham Advertiser, 30 January 1981.
155. P. Sieghart in The Guardian, 4 February 1981.
156. The author attended all public sessions.
157. See note 135.
158. RSA solicitor at the Railway Street Public Inquiry, 3 February 1981.
159. See note 158.
160. Deputy Chief Environmental Health Officer at the Railway Street Public Inquiry, 3 February 1981.
161. Interviews with Environmental Health Officer, Wear Valley District Council, 7 October 1981; Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council Grants Officer, 9 December 1980.
162. See note 160.
163. Railway Street Public Inquiry, 3 February 1981.
164. RSA Architect at the Railway Street Public Inquiry, 4 February 1981.
165. Chair of Esh Parish Council at the Railway Street Public Inquiry, 4 February 1981.
166. Railway Street Public Inquiry, 4 February 1981.
167. Letter from A J Walton, Senior Executive Officer, Department of the Environment Northern Regional Office to the Chief Executive, Derwentside District Council, 13 April 1981.
168. See note 152.
169. See note 145.
170. Department of the Environment, Circular 13/75: Housing Act 1974: Renewal Strategies.
171. See note 9.
172. Durham City Council, Housing Investment Programme 1982/83: Local Housing Strategy Statement, 1981.
173. See note 131.
174. See note 131.
175. See note 131.

- 176. See note 9.
- 177. See note 172.
- 178. See note 131.
- 179. See note 172.
- 180. Durham City News, Summer 1981.
- 181. See note 180.
- 182. See note 172.
- 183. See note 172.
- 184. See note 172.
- 185. See note 172.
- 186. See note 172.
- 187. See note 181.
- 188. See note 181.
- 189. Durham Advertizer, 25 July 1980.
- 190. Durham Advertizer, 19 September 1980.
- 191. Durham Advertizer 26 June 1981.
- 192. Durham Advertizer, 31 July 1983.
- 193. Durham Advertizer, 26 June 1981.
- 194. Durham Advertizer, 5 December 1980.
- 195. Durham Street Press, 30 January 1981.
- 196. Durham Advertizer, 13 February 1981.
- 197. Durham Street Press August/September 1981.
- 198. Durham Advertizer, 27 March 1981.
- 199. Durham Advertizer, 20 February 1981.
- 200. Durham City News, Summer 1981.
- 201. Durham Advertizer, 13 March 1981.

- 202. No informants were able to identify any such action, although there was an attempt to organise a tenants' association in Gilesgate, Durham City, in 1982, but this was short-lived.
- 203. Durham City Council, Minutes of Housing Services Committee, 12 October 1981.
- 204. Durham Street Press, October/November 1981.
- 205. The Guardian, 5 October 1981.
- 206. The Guardian, 9 October 1981.
- 207. Durham Advertiser, 20 November 1981.
- 208. Durham Advertiser, 8 January 1982.
- 209. Interview with Clare Hepworth, District Labour Party member, 9 August 1983.
- 210. Durham Advertiser, 12 February 1982.
- 211. Durham Advertiser, 4 March 1982.
- 212. See note 172.
- 213. See note 138.
- 214. See note 172.
- 215. Old Framwellgate Moor Residents Association, The Improvement Potential of Framwellgate Moor, 1978.
- 216. C. Taylor, Framwellgate Moor, Durham City: A Report of local community action against a Council's housing policy, Report to Tyneside Housing Aid Centre, December 1977.
- 217. Report of City Architect, City Engineer, City Environmental Health Officer and City Planning Officer to Housing Services Committee, Durham City Council, 13 June 1977.
- 218. See note 217.
- 219. See note 216.
- 220. See note 215.
- 221. Letter from Chief Executive, Durham City Council, to OFMRA, 14 July 1977.
- 222. Letter to chair of Durham City Council Housing Services Committee from OFMRA, 20 August 1977.

- 223. Letter from chair of Housing Services Committee, Durham City Council to OFMRA, 22 September 1977.
- 224. Letter from OFMRA to Mark Hughes MP, 22 August 1977.
- 225. Letter from T Nicklin to Chief Environmental Health Officer, Durham City Council, 25 October 1977.
- 226. The Guardian, 14 November 1977.
- 227. See note 216.
- 228. Letter from T Nicklin to the Durham City Environmental Health Officer, 25 November 1977.
- 229. OFMRA, The Association's Comments on the Durham City Council Survey of Old Framwellgate Moor, 1978.
- 230. See note 216.
- 231. The Journal, 29 November 1977.
- 232. See note 231.
- 233. Durham City Council, Minutes of Housing Services Committee, 6 February 1978.
- 234. See note 215.
- 235. OFMRA, Diary of Events and Correspondence to 30 September 1978.
- 236. See note 217.
- 237. See note 229.
- 238. Letter from Mark Hughes MP to OFMRA, 22 January 1979.
- 239. Letter from Durham City Chief Executive to OFMRA, 26 February 1979.
- 240. Letter from Durham City Environmental Health Officer to OFMRA, 11 July 1979.
- 241. Interview with chair of OFMRA, 28 January 1982.
- 242. Letter from Durham City Environmental Health Officer to OFMRA, 4 August 1980.
- 243. Letter from Durham City Engineer to OFMRA, 7 August 1980.
- 244. Letter from OFMRA to Department of the Environment Northern Regional Office, 3 October 1980.

- 245. Durham City Council, Minutes of Housing Services Committee, 14 September 1981.
- 246. Durham City Council, Circular from the City Secretary to Old Framwellgate Moor residents, 14 October 1981.
- 247. Letter from OFMRA to members of Durham City Council, undated.
- 248. See note 247.
- 249. Letter from OFMRA to members of Durham City Council, undated.
- 250. OFMRA Newsletter, December 1981.
- 251. Durham Street Press February/March 1982.
- 252. Durham City Council, Minutes of Housing Services Committee, 9 December 1981.
- 253. The author was present at this meeting.
- 254. OFMRA meeting 10 March 1982, which the author attended.
- 255. Interview with Ralph Musgrave, OFMRA secretary, 5 March 1982.
- 256. Durham Street Press, June/July 1984.
- 257. See note 256.
- 258. Interview by telephone, Housing Officer, Durham City Council, 8.10.87.
- 259. See note 11.
- 260. Parliament of Northern Ireland, Parliamentary Debates, Vol 56, Session 1963-64, HMSO, Belfast, 1964.
- 261. Belfast Telegraph, 18 June 1969.
- 262. Interview with the Regional Director, Northern Ireland Housing Executive South Region, 8 April 1982.
- 263. The Economist, 29 May 1971.
- 264. The Newsletter, 8 July 1976.
- 265. See note 263.
- 266. Craigavon Planning Executive, undated leaflet.
- 267. Belfast Telegraph, 18 June 1969.
- 268. Irish Times, 15 August 1964.



269. Belfast Telegraph, 20 June 1969.
270. Interview with local planning consultant, 6 June 1981.
271. Interview with Tom French, Workers Party councillor, Craigavon Borough Council, 20 November 1980.
272. See note 270.
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294. Interview with A J Lavery, builder, Lurgan, 4 June 1981.
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- 337. See note 336.
- 338. See note 327.
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- 366. For example, in the course of making a Brass Tacks TV programme on the Railway Street struggle, councillors made off-the-record comments to the presenter about what they saw as the sexual immorality of some of the residents and linked this to the proposed amalgamation of four of the houses into a grouped dwelling scheme.

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